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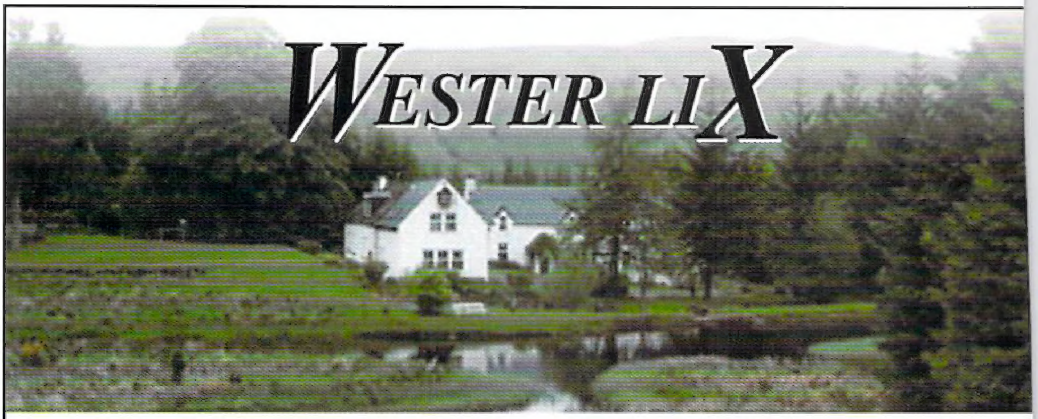
Sea Swallow

Annual Report of the Royal Naval Birdwatching Society

2000 £8 (US$16)



Wester Lix offers accommodation to groups or families for holiday or outdoor recreational pursuits, or even just for somewhere quiet to hideaway. In addition the site offers all the facilities required including catering to house events such as management retreats and training courses.

Some 200 years ago Wester Lix was a farm and two of the properties date back to this time. It now provides an ideal location for a comfortable and peaceful retreat being located in a remote secluded forest clearing, but within easy reach of nearby villages and local amenities. Features of the site include its own private lochan fed from the burn that runs through the site, all set within private grounds of nine acres.

Situated in the Trossachs region on the Scottish Highlands, Wester Lix lies on the south edge of Glen Dochart some two and a half miles from Killin to the western end of Loch Tay. Within the local region are several Munros including Ben Lawers and Ben More whilst Glen Coe and Loch Lomond are a short drive away.

2 of the 4 properties at Wester Lix are available for rent, Heather cottage accommodates 6+ while The Steading is suitable for groups of 8-10.

Alternatively there is our Tipi, an authentic American Indian design large enough to accommodate groups of 12 or more around its internal log fire. The Tipi is set away from the other properties to provide total peace and seclusion. By prior arrangement the Tipi is available for gatherings and events by groups using the cottages.

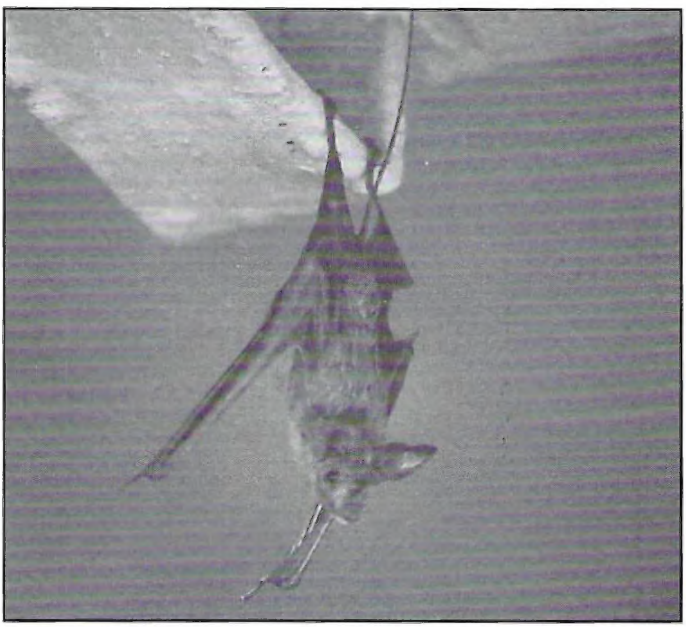
Heather Cottage

The Steading

Organised activity holidays can be arranged to suit all levels of experience and fitness from level walks to more demanding hikes and watersports on the nearby Lochs.

Call 01567 820990 or email gill@westerlix.co.uk
website: www.westerlix.co.uk

Cape Gannet *Morus capensis,* Lamberts Bay, South Africa, 7 March 2000.
Photo: Capt NG Cheshire MN.



Mouse-tailed Bat *Rhinopomatidae muscatellum* onboard HMS *York,*
Gulf of Suez. *Photo:* CPO S Copsey.

OFFICERS OF THE ROYAL NAVAL BIRDWATCHING SOCIETY

(Registered Charity No. 207619)

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For details of Local Representatives and other useful addresses, see inside back cover.

Subscription rates: Full and associate members £8 (£7 if covenanted) annually. Due 1 January.

Library rates: Cost of *Sea Swallow*, (£8) plus postage.

Membership: has been widened from the RN to include those, regardless of nationality, who share a common background of the sea.

Aims and Activities: The primary aim of the Society is to promote a forum for the exchange of information on seabirds, and of landbirds at sea, by members for whom birdwatching is a spare-time recreation and hobby. The secondary aim is to co-ordinate the efforts of individual members using standardised recording methods so that observations can be of value to the professional ornithologist ashore. In addition to the promotion of observations afloat, the RNBWS organises fieldwork and expeditions, usually in cooperation with the Army and RAF Ornithological Societies.

RNBWS Record Forms: Standardised forms for recording Seabirds and Landbirds at sea, Seabird Census sheets and Birds examined in the Hand (BEH) forms have been designed for use at sea. Stocks are held by Warrant Officer C A R Bailey, 8 Grange Close, Gosport, Hants PO12 3DX (Tel: 01705 526264). Please give detailed requirements and enclose a large (A4) stamped and self addressed envelope.

Completed Record: Forms (both Seabirds and Landbirds) should be sent to the Editor of *Sea Swallow*.

Material for publication in *Sea Swallow* should be sent to the Editor. Instructions to authors can be found on the inside back cover.

An application form for membership is at page 62 of this edition of *Sea Swallow*.

Sea Swallow 49 (2000)

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PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD

As I write, the HMS *Ocean* Task Group is returning from operations off Sierra Leone, while a second group is on its way back from a major exercise in the Gulf region. Elsewhere in home waters and overseas the tasks which underpin security and safety on the seas continue day by day, and the Fleet is clearly as busy as ever, providing plenty of opportunities for our RN and RM members to travel and watch birds. I just hope that the pace of life today, for them and for their Merchant Navy counterparts, allows time to watch birds and indeed to contribute to the Millennium Bird Count. The RNBWS is certainly involved in the UK, where the Seabird 2000 census is under way. Ken Partridge, our local representative in Plymouth, has been responsible for organising the coverage of much of the South Devon coast, and several of our RN members have, at the request of the RSPB, carried out the census in Devonport Naval Base. Meanwhile, further inland our Honorary Secretary has been conducting a single-handed count of species in a wide area of MOD land. So as you see, valuable work is going on, and I hope that wherever you live or are serving you too are finding an opportunity to enjoy the bird life around you, with opportunities to for you to report what you see, and thus contribute to the expansion of our knowledge.

David Dobson, President

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

The opening of the new millennium has seen my return to Fleet duties, in command of the Hydrographic Surveying Squadron. To my delight, this allows opportunities to visit my ships at sea and to make some minor contributions to the observations published in this journal, some of them from waters which I have not frequented before. This has only reinforced my enthusiasm for our core activity; an enthusiasm which responses to the RNBWS questionnaire indicate is shared by about two-thirds of the respondents.

I would like to thank all those who have taken the trouble to return their forms, and especially those who have offered assistance with the administration of the society. Lieutenant Commander David Griffiths is already in the process of taking over the mantle of Honorary Treasurer from Commander Gary Lewis. The Honorary Secretary and the Expedition and Fieldwork Member will be making contact with others who have kindly indicated that they have capacity to help in specific work. A number of interesting suggestions have also been submitted, and these are receiving the attention of the Executive Committee.

The full results of this canvassing effort will be tabled at the AGM. Meanwhile, your committee is encouraged in continuing to seek pragmatic co-operation with AOS and RAFOS for land-based fieldwork and expeditions.

As you know, we are committed to publishing another volume of *Sea Swallow* in 2001, and we are pursuing several angles to refresh and extend the content. However, the long-term viability lies in your hands. Please keep material coming in! Meanwhile I am sure that you will enjoy the following articles from Gary Lewis and his hard-working contributors.

Michael Barritt, Chairman

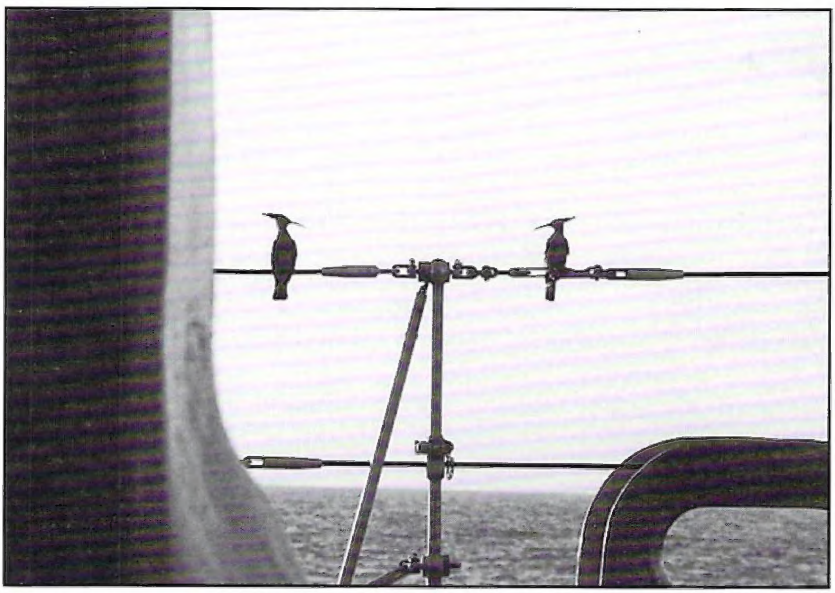
EDITORIAL

In this, my second *Sea Swallow* as Editor, I have maintained a similar approach to last year. I have obtained sympathetic advertising to help keep the cost of publishing down, but retained the traditional layout of articles. We are still in need of all your records of seabirds and landbirds seen at sea; without our regular contributors, these two key sections would be very thin indeed! Similary, I am very pleased to receive photographs, either print or slide, to help make the publication more appealing and to support the excellent contributions.

Sea Swallow 49 embraces the full gamut of the Society's activities with articles with WO1 Peter Carr providing the second, and final, part of the Diego Garcia expedition report and the SWAST team in the Falkland Islands giving an overview of some of their records from that very productive area. I have maintained my 'tradition' of involving a less scientific article in order to encourage the truly amateur traveller to contribute; an account of Peter Cunningham's voyage makes interesting and envious reading.

In October this year, I return to sea to serve onboard HMS *Montrose* where I will diligently record what I see and publish in *Sea Swallow 50*. If you are in a similarly fortunate position, please do likewise. As a consequence of returning to sea, I may have to publish *Sea Swallow 50* a month earlier next year. Please note this when forwarding articles and records for inclusion.

Gary Lewis, Editor



Hoopoes *Upupa epops* 29° 27'N, 49° 10'E, 5 September 1998. *Photo*: CPO S Copsey.

OBSERVATIONS OF SEABIRDS

by Dr WRP Bourne

The number of reports continues to decline, but they include some massive ones. Mr and Mrs Watts and David Ballance have sailed right round the world, the latter making important observations around eastern New Guinea on the way. After inspecting the British Antarctic, Nigel Milius has now moved on to the Australasian sector, getting off on Macquarie Island. Stewart Hingston has spent another year in the Caspian Sea (Table 1), though unfortunately he has now left it, and Judith Pentreath has continued yachting up the west coast of Europe and around the Virigin Islands. Between them they have produced as many notes as ever.

The main new development is that whale-watchers and twitchers have finally noticed that the ferries between England and Spain, which Steve Hales and Derek Hallett have been exploiting for years, cross the old whaling grounds over the shelfbreak in the Bay of Biscay, and the popular bird prints have suddenly become full of highly coloured accounts of what can be seen there (Cresswell 2000, Scott 2000). The Biscay Cetacean Report with an ornithological contribution by David Gray (1999) is reviewed later. We are also grateful to the Cartwrights and Johnsons for further reports from there, summarised in Tables 2 and 3.

Observers (number of sheets of notes in brackets).

Mr David Ballance. MV *Teignbank* Dunkerque-Guadeloupe Passage-Panama-Tahiti-Noumea-Auckland-Suva-Vanuatu-Lae-Rabaul-Torres Strait-Darwin-Singapore-Suez-Hamburg. Oct '99-Jan '00 (20).

Captain M K Barritt. HMS *Beagle.* Gubbat Bintawt-Salalah, Oman. 3-4 Mar 2000 (2).

Messrs Peter and Mike and Mrs Karen Cartwright. MV *Pride of Bilbao.* Portsmouth-Bilbao and return. 16-18 Aug 1998. 15-17 Aug and 28 Sep-1 Oct 1999 (6).

Messrs Stephen Hales and Derek Hallett. MV *Val de Loire,* return trip Plymouth-Santander 15-17 May 2000 (1).

Chief Engineer Officer S J Hingston. MV *Tabriz Khalilbeyli,* observations in the Caspian Sea in 1998 (82).

Mr and Mrs I G Johnson. Portsmouth-Santurzi (for Bilbao) and return, 15-18 Sept 1998 (4).

Mr Nigel Milius, MV *Prince of Scandinavia,* Gothenburg to Kristiansand and return. 7 and 9 Dec 1999 (2). MV *Aurora Australis.* Hobart-Antarctica-Macquarie Island, Feb-Mar 2000 (15).

Mrs Judith Pentreath, Yacht *Salvation Jane.* Almeria - Isle of Wight, Apr-Jul 1999 (10). Yacht *Fiskery.* British Virgin Islands, May 2000 (2).

Mr Owen Roberts, Celtic Bird Tours. Celtic Sea from Neyland Marina to 23nm west of St Anne's Head, 25 Aug '99 (2).

HMS *Scott,* HI/Cruise ref. 839 leg C. Environmental observations in Western Approaches, May 2000 (2).

Mr B R H and Mrs E M Watts, SS *Oriana* world cruise Southampton-Cape Town-Mascarenes-Malacca Strait-Bali-Fremantle-Tasmania-Cook Strait-Honolulu-Vancouver-Panama-Southampton, Jan-Mar 1999 (33).

OBSERVATIONS

Observers initials (), distances in nautical miles (nm), water temperatures in (°C). *Sea Swallow* (SS). All dates are in 1999 unless indicated otherwise.

PENGUINS *Spheniscidae*

Emperor Penguin ***Aptenodytes forsteri.*** Up to 24 between 66.2-66.8°S 63.0-100.5°E (-0.5--1.7°C) seven times during 1-14 Mar 00 with 186 at 66.9°S 77.1°E on 11 Mar (NM).

Adelie Penguin ***Pygoscelis adeliae.*** Up to 250 between 64.8-68.1°S and 63.0-110.5°E (-0.5--1.5°C) nine times between 1-17 Mar 00 and 739 at 66.9°S 77.1°E on 11 Mar (NM).

Rockhopper Penguin ***Eudytes chrysocome.*** Surveys in Nov-Dec 1998 revealed 255, 577 nests on Staten Island. 94 per cent in Bahia Franklin, a third of the world population of the southern form (Schiavini 2000).

Jackass Penguin *Spheniscus demensis* - Bettysbanie, Cape Town, South Africa 5 March 2000. *Photo:* Capt NG Cheshire MN.

ALBATROSSES *Diomedeidae*

Wandering Albatross ***Diomedea exulans.*** Up to ten between 34.8-42.1°S 10.8°W-177°E eight times between 19 Jan and 24 Feb (B & EW), three immatures at 34.5°S 174°E on 21 Nov and one at 30°S 176°E next day (DB), and seven at 48.2°S 129.8°E on 19 Feb, one at 52.4°S 114.9°E on 23 Feb 53.9°S 108.6°E next day, and 61.5°S 128.7°E on 19 Mar 00 (15.6-1.5°C) (NM).

Royal Albatross ***Diomedea epomophora.*** Two at 40.1°S 171.7°E on 22 Feb and one at 39.5°S 177.0°E on 24 Feb (B & EW) one at 30.5°S 175.5°E on 19 Nov and three at 34.5°S 175°E on 21 Nov (DB).

Black-footed Albatross ***Phoebastria nigripes***. Up to eight five times between 23.1°N 14 156.1°W and 46.4°S 129.1°W on 6-10 Mar and one at 33.6°S 120.8°W on 15 Mar (B & EW).

Laysan Albatross ***Phoebastria immutabilis.*** Five at 36.7°S 142.9°W on 8 Mar and one at 42.7°S 135.5°W next day (B & EW).

Black-browed Albatross ***Thalassarche melanophris.*** Up to eight four times between 44.7-63.1°S 143.1-67.6°E during 19-29 Mar (15.6-0.9°C) (NM).

Shy Albatross ***Thalassarche cauta.*** One at 44.7°S 143.1°E on 19 Mar (15.6-12.6°) and one with a white head and two with grey heads and bills at 46.3°S 136.6°E next day (15.6-12°C) (NM).

Yellow-nosed Albatross ***Thalassarche chlororhynchos.*** One at 42.1°S 136.6°E on 16 Feb (B & EW).

Grey-headed Albatross ***Thalassarche chrysostoma.*** One or two three times between 53.9-63.1°S 154.7-67.6°E 24 Feb-23 Mar 00 (7-0.5°C) (NM).

Sooty Albatross ***Phoebetria fusca.*** Two at 39.6°S 127.4°E, 15 Feb (B & EW), and one at 48.2°S 129.8°E and 52.4°S 114.9°E, 21 and 23 Feb 00 (11.4°C) (NM).

Light-mantled Albatross ***Phoebetria palpebrata.*** Up to 9 eleven times between 59.5-68.1°S 63.0-154.7°E (6- -0.5°C) 27 Feb 23 Mar 00 (NM).

FULMARS *Fulmarinae*

Southern Giant Petrel ***Macronectes giganteus.*** Up to ten seen 13 times between 59.8-68.1°S 63.0-137.5°E between 28 Feb-20 Mar 00 (-1.5-2°C) (NM).

Northern Giant Petrel ***Macronectes halli.*** One seen at 57.7°S 93.1°E on 26 Feb 00 (1.8°C) (NM). Unspecified giant petrels were also seen at 35.2°S 116.1°E on 14 Feb (B & EW) and an immature at 30.5°S 171.5°E on 19 Nov (DB).

Northern Fulmar ***Fulmarus glacialis.*** One in the dark phase 22nm west of St Anne's Head, Pembroke, 25 Aug (OR). Three between Ushant and north of Roscoff, 28 Jan 00 and 41 from Dover to Rotterdam, 30 Jan 00 (DB).

Southern Fulmar ***Fulmarus glacialoides.*** Up to 53 seen 14 times between 61.6- 68.1°S 63.0-106.5°E (0.5- -1.5°C) 28 Feb-18 Mar 00 (NM).

Antarctic Petrel ***Thalassoica antarctica.*** Seen nine times between 64.4-68.1°S 63.0-110.5°E (0.5- -1.5°C) between 1-17 Mar 00, including at least 1500 flushed with other species from an ice flow at 68.1°S 76.9°E on the 8th, 950 at 66.9°S 77.1°E on the 11th, and at least 1870 (one with a 5 in silver fish) at 64.9°S 106.5°E on the 15th (NM).

Cape Petrel ***Daption capense.*** One at 27.1°S 112.8°E on 12 Feb (B & EW), and up to 117 seen between 57.9-68.1°S 63.0-146.0°E (0.5- -1.5°C) between 27 Feb-21 Mar 00 (NM).

Snow Petrel ***Pagodroma nivea.*** Seen eight times between 64.4-68.1°S 63.0-110.5°E (0.5- -1.7°C) between 1-17 Mar 00, with about 1400 at 66.9°S 77.1°E on the 11th (NM).

Kerguelen Petrel ***Lugensa brevirostris.*** Twelve possible birds at 46.3°S 136.6°E on 20 Feb 00 (12°C) (NM).

Antarctic Prion ***Pachyptila desolata.*** Up to 300 prions, where identified this species, seen 15 times between 44.7-66.2°S 63.0-143.1°E (15.6- -1.5°C) during 19 Feb-23 Mar 00 (NM).

Narrow-billed Prion ***Pachyptila belcheri.*** Three at 55.9°S 100.9°E on 25 Feb and one at 59.4°S 85.2°E two days later (2-0.5°C) (NM).

Fairy Prion ***Pachyptila turtur.*** Several at 42.1°S 136.6°E on 16 Feb (B & EW), two in the Hauraki Gulf on 21 Nov (DB), and 11 Fairy or Fulmar Prions *P crassirostris* at 52.4°S 114.9°E on 23 Feb 00 and 16 at 55.9°S 100.9°E two days later (4.5-2°C (NM).

Blue Petrel ***Halobaena caerulea.*** Up to 37 seen four times between 59.4-66.2°S 63.0-119.9°E during 27 Feb-18 Mar 00 (NM).

Tahiti Petrel ***Pterodroma (r) rostrata.*** Seen 18 times in the west Pacific, including two at 09.8°S 128°W on 3 Nov and 11.5°S 133.8°W next day, at least two at 13°S 137°W on 5 Nov four at 16.7°S 1.48-3°W on 7 Nov, two off Moorea on 9 Nov, one at 18.3°S 155°W next day and 25°S 167.5°E on 18 Nov, two at 11°S 157.8°W on 3 Dec and three at 08°S 151°W next day, one between Lepsius Pt and Long I in the Bismarck Sea on 6 December, eight off Crown I and one N of Tolokiwa on 8 Dec, one Blanche Bay, Rabaul on 9 Dec, then 16 between 10°S 147°E to 09.5°S 146°E and the last at 09.5°S 145°E on 21 Dec (DB).

Mascarene Petrel ***Pterodroma aterrima.*** A possible bird off Le Port, Reunion on 28 Jan (B & EW).

Kermadec Petrel ***Pterodroma neglecta.*** A light bird at 30.7°S 176°E on 22 Nov (DB).

Herald Petrel ***Pterodroma arminjoniana.*** Three dark birds at 19.7°S 163°W on 11 Nov, one at 21°S 171°W next day, and two at 11°S 173°W on 15 Nov and 35°S 175°W on the 21st (DB).

Phoenix Petrel ***Pterodroma alba.*** One at 14.7°S 142.3°W on 6 Nov (DB).

Great-winged Petrel ***Pterodroma macroptera.*** UD to 35 five times between 35.2- 48.2°S 116.1-136.6°E during 14-21 Feb 99 and 00 (B & EW NM).

White-headed Petrel ***Pterodroma lessonii.*** Up to 12 seen 46.3-63.2°S 119.9-154.7°E on 16 Feb '99 (B & EW) and 20 Feb-23 Mar 00 (NM).

Mottled Petrel ***Pterodroma inexpectata.*** One at 21°S 171°W on 12 Nov and 27.8°S 169.7°W on 18 Nov (DB), and at 59.8°S 137.5°E (1.5-2°C) on 20 Mar 00 (NM).

Black-winged Petrel ***Pterodroma nigripennis.*** One at 12.5°S 137°W 5 Nov 88 between 21°S 171°W and 21.5°S 175°W 12 Nov five at 21.7°S 179°W next day and at least two at 23°S 177°W 23 Nov (DB).

Soft-plumaged Petrel ***Pterodroma mollis.*** Three at 18.4°S 113.7°E 11 Feb, one at 39.6°S 127.4°E 15 Feb (B & EW) five at 48.2°S 129.8°E (11°C) 21 Feb 00 (NM).

Capped Petrel ***Pterodroma (h) hasitata.*** One going east at 06°N 63°W in sight of Guadelupe and Monserrat Is on 22 Oct (DB).

Dark-rumped Petrel ***Pterodroma phaepygia.*** One possible bird at 04°N 89°W 28 Oct (DB).

Juan Fernandez Petrel ***Pterodroma externa.*** Eleven caught flying fish under the bows at 05.5°S 115.7°W on 1 Nov, possibly two at 07°S 121°W 2 Nov 31 at 09°S 126°W next day 13 at 11°S 131.5°W 4 Nov 8 at 14.5°S 142°W on 5 Nov two at 17°S 148°W 7 Nov and three distant Juan Fernandez or White-necked Petrels at 21.7°S 179°W on 13 Nov (DB).

White-necked Petrel ***Pterodroma (externa) cervicalis.*** One 22°S 173°E 15 Nov at least 45 at 23.5°S 177°E to 20.5°S-177.6°E (appeared collared and capped with white foreheads and a more emphatic underwing pattern than Juan Fernandez Petrels), nine 18°S 173°E on 26 Nov (DB).

Barau's Petrel ***Pterodroma baraui.*** One off Le Port, Reunion on 28 Jan (B & EW).

Cook's Petrel ***Pterodroma cookii.*** 14 at 19.7°S 163°W on 11 Nov seemed greyer than Stejneger's Petrel, with clear white outer tail feathers and a rapid sharp devious flight (DB).

Gould's Petrel ***Pterodroma leucoptera.*** A very dark-headed Cookilaria seen at 22°S 169°E on 15 Nov was probably this species. Another at 27.8°S 169.7°E on 18 Nov at least four between 30.5°S 171.5°E and 32°S on 19 Nov with a distinctive heavily hooded appearance one with grey underparts and a largely dark underwing off Malo, Vanuatua on 28 Nov (DB).There is further confirmation of reports by Neil Cheshire and others that this supposedly tropical species occurs south of Australia (Surman *et al* 1967 SS 47: 27), including at least one, possibly ten (described) at 44.3°S 144.2°E (15.6°C) on 19 Feb '00 and one at 46.5°S 135.5°E (12°C) next day (NM).

Stejneger's Petrel ***Pterodroma longirostris.*** One at 01°S 103.5°W on 30 Oct, at least 50 at 03.5°S 110°W-04.5°S 113°W next day, 37 at 05.5°S 116°W to 8°S 123°W on 1 Nov 23 at 07.3°S 121°W-08°S 123°W on 2 Nov 13 at 09°S 126°W-09.3°S 127°W on 3 Nov one at 11.2°S 132°W on 4 Nov and off Tahiti on 6 and 7 Nov (DB).

Pycroft's Petrel ***Pterodroma (longirostris) pycrofti.*** At least 114 in the outer Hauraki Gulf on 11 Nov resembled Stejneger's Petrel, but were greyer without the cap: 25 were seen north to 27.5°S 176°E next day, and 45 small gadfly petrels between 23.4°S 177°E and 20.5°S 177°E the day after (DB).

Bulwer's Petrel ***Bulweria bulwerii.*** A possible bird at 07.5°N 73.8°E on 7 Jan 00 (DB).

Jouanin's Petrel ***Bulweria fallax.*** One at 10.1°N 60.3°E on 9 Jan '00, five at 11°N 55°E next day, 15 off Abd el Kuri on 11 Jan, and one at 12.4°N 47°E next day (DB). Four in 20 minutes at 16.9°N 54.3°E (23°C) on 4 Mar 00 (MKB).

SHEARWATERS ***Procellariinae***

Grey Petrel ***Procellaria cinerea.*** Up to three five times between 35.2-63.2°S 116.1-154.7°E in Feb-Mar (B & EW, NM).

White-chinned Petrel ***Procellaria aequinoctialis.*** Up to 15 seen 15 times between 27.1-66.2°S 02.6°W-155.0°E (15.6- -0.5°C) between 20 Jan-18 Mar (B & EW NM).

Parkinson's Petrel ***Procellaria parkinsoni.*** 21 seen from 34.5°S going N from Auckland on 21 Nov to 30.7°S 176°E next day: a large dark petrel with conspicuous white underwing flashes seen at 01°N 97°W on 29 Oct might also have been this species or *P westlandica, (DB).*

Streaked Shearwater ***Calonectris leucomelas.*** In the Bismarck Sea 5000 flew west in the Vitiaz Strait at dawn on 6 Dec to form a raft 15km N of Wasu, then 1000 were seen west to a point north of Saidor. There were 745 off Madang in the early morninig to Narega Id at dusk on 8 Dec, 2560 between Lolobau I and Kimbe Roads on 13 Dec, and 1000 between Cape Yamegon and Finschafen on 18 Dec 125 off Ragave Point in the Solomon Sea on 20 Dec '98 off Port Moresby and ten at 09.5°S 145.5°E next day, 3220 includinig groups of over 300 mostly moving west with some big rafts for 3.5 hrs at 10.6°S 141°E in the Gulf of Carpentaria on 22 Dec 300 at 10.7°S 134.4°E in the Arafura Sea next day, and four with fishing boats south of Sumbawa in the Indian Ocean on 26 Dec (DB).

Cory's Shearwater ***Calonectris diomedea.*** Some 16 records all round Spain in Apr-Jun with a maximum of 21 at 43.2°N 09.2°W on 6 Jun (16-20°C) (JP), one outside Santander on 16 May (H & H), maxima of 55 on 15 Aug and 95 next day at ca 45°N 4°W over the Biscay shelfbreak (P M & KC), one 22nm west of St Anne's Head, Pembroke on 25 Aug (OR), 48 in four hrs mostly going SW between 43°N 13°W and 41°N 17°W on 15 Oct, 16 between 39°N 21°W and 37°N 24°W approaching Santa Maria in the Azores next day (DB), and one at 32.2°S 32.6°E in the winter quarters off South Africa on 24 Jan 99 (B & EW).

Wedge-tailed Shearwater ***Puffinus pacificus.*** Two off Le Port, Reunion on 28 Jan and five off Port Louis, Mauritius, next day two at 18.4°S 113.7°E on 11 Feb and hundreds,s over 12 in the pale phase, at 27.1°S 112.8°E next day, at least one at 39.5°S 177.0°E on 26 Feb and eight at 20.0°S 173.5°W next day (B & EW), at least 107 mostly joining west between 21°S 171°W and 21.5°S 175°W on 12 Nov five at 21.7°S 179°W next day, 127 between 22°S 170°E and 22°S 169°E passing Hunter and Matthews Is on 15 Nov at least 50 at dawn within the lagoon at Noumea on 16 Nov 369 between 24.7°S 167.5°E and 27.8°S 169.7°E on 18 Nov one at 27°S 176°E on 22 Nov 20 between 23.5°S 177°E and 21.5°S (four feeding from air) on 23 Nov at least 66 between 18°S 173°E and 172°E on 26 Nov at least five within the reef. Port

Vile,Vanuatua on 27 Nov 19 between Ambryn and Manakula, Vanuatua next day, 74 mostly goinig west at 13.7°S 164.5°E and 15 at 12.6°S 162°E on 2 Dec 13 at 11°S 158°E next day and 08°S 151°E on the day after, nine NW of Narega I, Bismarck Sea, on 8 Dec 18 between Cape Pomas and Rabaul on 9 Dec 280 between Lolobau I and Kimbe Roads. 13 Dec one west of Umboi I in the Vitiaz strait, 18 Dec six NNE of Darnley I, Gulf Papua. 21 Dec (DB). There were 12, one pale at 17.8°N 56.5°E off Omen on 3 Mar '00 (MKB): the pale phase does not appear to have been recorded in the Arabian Sea before.

Buller's Shearwater ***Puffinus bulleri.*** Many at 40.1°S 171.7°E and 39.5°S 177.0°E on 22 and 24 Feb (B & EW), ten between 01.5°N 96°W and 00.5°N 99°W on 29 Oct and 18 in the Hauraki Gulf north to 34.4°S 175°W on 21 Nov (DB).

Flesh-footed Shearwater ***Puffinus carneipes.*** Two at 18.4°S 113.7°E on 11 Feb and dozens at 27.1°S 112.8°E next day, one at 42.1°S 136.6°E on 16 Feb three at 39.5°S 177.0°E on 24 Feb and at least one at 39.5°S 177.0°E on 16 Feb (B & EW). Over 150 in the Hauraki Gulf to ca 70 km N of Auckland on 21 Nov one at 23°S 177°W on 23 Nov and in Kimbe Bay in the Bismarch Sea on 13 Dec (bill clearly seen), two at 07.5°N 73.8°E on 7 Jan 00 (DB).

Pink-footed Shearwater ***Puffinus (carneipes) creatopus.*** Several at 19.9°N 106.4°W on 17 Mar ca 25 at 14.6°N 95.0°W on 19 Mar (B & EW), at least ten south at 03.5°N 91°W on 28 Oct (DB).

Great Shearwater ***Puffinus gravis.*** 300 at ca 45°N 04°W on the Biscay shelfbreak on 15 Aug and 341 there next day (PM & KC), five 22nm west of St Anne's Head, Pembroke, on 25 Aug (OR), and 5000 SW in diminishinig numbers for an hour between 48°N 07°W and 46°N 09°W on 14 Oct (DB).

Sooty and Short-tailed Shearwaters ***Puffinus griseus and P tenuirostris.*** These were not always separated, and will be treated together. A Sooty was seen at 32.2°S 32.6°E on 24 Jan and 2-3 with several thousand Short-tailed off Hobart on 17 Feb several of the later including one on board at 40.1°S 149.3°E next day, hundreds with five Sooties at 35.3°S 155.0°E on 20 Feb and one Sooty at 20.0°S 173.5°W on 27 Feb (B & EW). One Sooty was seen 22nm W St Anne's Head. Pembroke on 25 Aug (OR), and three with the Great Shearwaters at ca 47°N 08°W on 14 Oct (DB). 240 Short-tailed flew mainly SW in parties of up to 37 between 24.5°S 167.5°E and 27.8°S on 18 Nov twelve between 23.5°S 177°E S and 21.5°S 177.6°E on 23 Nov seven at 18°S 122.5°E on 26 Nov four between Ambryn and Malakula on 28 Nov one seen from land off Million Dollar Pt Santo, Vanuatu on 29 Nov 45 between Lolobau I and Kimbe Roads in the Bismarck Sea on 13 Dec two NW of Narega I 28 Dec (DB). 80 Sooties off Hobart (18.2°C) on 18 Feb 00 300 with 5 Short-tailed and 166 dark shearwaters at 44.7°S 143.1°E (15.6-12.6°C) next day, 53 dark (where identified Sooty) shearwaters at 46.3°S 136.6°E (12°C) on 20 Feb 19 at 48.2°S 129.8°E (11°C) next day. 17 at 50.5°S 121.9.°E (8-6°C) on 22 Feb 63 at 52.4°S 114.9°E (4.5-3.5°C) on 23 Feb 224 at 55.9°S 100.9°E (2°C) on 25 Feb 167+ at 57.7°S 93.1°E (1.8°C) on 26 Feb 64 at 59.4°S 85.2°E (2-0.5°C) on 27 Feb 17 at 61.6°S 75.8°E (0-5°C) on 28 Feb 18 at 63.1°S 67.6°E (0.5°C) on 29 Feb 271+ at 66.2°S 63.0°E (-0.5--1.5°C) on 1 Mar 57 at 65.0°S 110.5°E (-1.7- - 0.9°C) on 17 Mar 316 at 63.2°S 119.9°E (-0.5-0.5°C) on 18 Mar over 1000 at 61.5°S 128.7°E (1.5- 2°C) on 19 Mar 800 at 59.8°S 137.5°E (1.5- 2°C) on 20 Mar and 32 at 57.9°S 146.0°E (2-2.5°C) on 21 Mar (NM).

Manx Shearwater ***Puffinus puffinus.*** Seen on 15 occasions off W Europe between the vicinity of Lisbon on 18 May and Brest on 4 July (15-21°C), the most 65 at 39.8°N 09.3°W on 23 May (JP), with one at 39°N 21°W on 16 Oct and 34°N 30°W next day (DB).

Townsend's Shearwater ***Puffinus auricularis.*** One reported at 19.9°N 106.4°W on 17 Mar

and a large party at 14.6°N 95.0°W two days later (B & EW), but it should be noted that pale Wedge-wailed Shearwaters also occur here.

Balearic Shearwater ***Puffinus mauretanicus.*** See Table 2: 12 probably of this form at 36.7°N 03.0°W (16°C) on 29 Apr (JP) and two 22nm west of St Anne's Head, Pembroke, on 25 Aug (OR).

Levantine Shearwater ***Puffinus yelkouan.*** Two at 33.5°N 24.8°E south of Crete on 20 Jan '00 (DB).

Fluttering Shearwater ***Puffinus gavia.*** One at 39.5°S 177.0°E on 24 Feb (B & EW), and 39+ in the Hauraki Gulf to ca 70 km north of Auckland on 21 Nov (DB).

Little Shearwater ***Puffinus assimilis.*** One at ca 44.3°N 4.2°W on the Biscay shelfbreak on 17 Aug '98, five at ca 45.6°N 4.2°W there on 16 Aug 99 and another at ca 46.3°N 4.2°W on 29 Sep (PM and KC: notes supplied), 11 at 27.1°S 112.8°E on 12 Feb one at 42.1°S 136.6°E on 16 Feb six at 39.5°S 177.0°E on 26 Feb (B & EW), and two in the Hauraki Gulf on 21 Nov (DB).

Audubon's Shearwater ***Puffinus lherminieri.*** Many off Le Port, Reunion, on 28 Jan and 3-4 off Pago Pago, American Samoa, on 28 Feb (B & EW). Ten between 16°N 63°W and 15.5°N 64°W on 22 Oct, two under terns at 14.7°S 142.3°W on 6 Nov two off Moorea 9 Nov 23 SW Abd el Kuri 11 Jan 00, six at 12.3°N 47°E and one north of the Abu Ali (Hanish) Is next day (DB).

Heinroth's Shearwater ***Puffinus heinrothi.*** Seven small shearwaters seen together in the distance in Kimbe Bay, Bismarck Sea, on 13 Dec may have been this species? (DB).

STORM-PETRELS ***Hydrobatidae***

Wilson's Storm-petrel ***Oceanites oceanicus.*** 5-10 seen 22nm west of St Anne's Head, Pembroke 15 Aug (OR). One 35°N 29°W, SW of Santa Maria, Azores, two to 31°N 37°W next day (DB). Up to 29 seen nine times between 59.4-68.1°S 63.0-128.7°E (2- -1.5°C) 27 Feb-19 Mar 00 (NM).

White-faced Storm-petrel ***Pelagodroma marina.*** One at 35.2°S 116.1°E on 14 Feb and on board off Hobart on 17 Feb (B & EW), two in Hauraki Gulf north to 34.4°S 175°E, 21 Nov (DB). One has been reported without any description from 55.1°S 66.1°W in the Drake Strait on 4 Jun '95 (Montalti and Orgeira 1997).

White-bellied Storm-petrel ***Fregetta grallaria.*** One at 07°S 121°W on 2 Nov (DB).

Black-bellied Storm-petrel ***Fregetta tropica.*** Seven at 46.3°S 136.6°E (12°C) on 20 Feb one at 48.2°S 129.8°E (11°C) next day, two at 57.7°S 93.1°E (1.8°C) 26 Feb (NM).

White-throated (or Polynesian) Storm-petrel ***Nesofregetta fuliginosa.*** Several dark storm-petrels seen off Pago Pago, American Samoa on 28 Feb (B & EW).

Leach's Storm-petrel ***Oceanodroma leucorhoa.*** One on board 06.3°N 25.7°W on 11 Jan (B & EW), two at 43°N 13°W 15 Oct one at 35°N 28°W on 17 Oct (DB). The growing list of records from the southern hemisphere now include a bird seen at 50.2°S 38.5°W north of South Georgia in Feb 94 (Veit *et al* 1996) and one caught in a Black-bellied Storm-petrel colony on King George I at ca 64°S in the South Shetlands in Feb '96 (Hahn & Quillfeldt 1998), a latitude comparable with that of the much less bleak northernmost colonies in the North Atlantic.

Swinhoe's Storm-petrel ***Oceanodroma monorhis.*** What appear to be the first for Australia were seen three times during a cruise from Broome to Ashmore Reef, the first at 15.3°S 121.5° and then 14 on the water at 14.7°S 121.6°E on 1 Nov 99, and at least ten at 12.6°S 122.6°E on 3 Nov (Hobcroft 2000).

Madeiran Storm-petrel ***Oceanodroma castro.*** 10+. 03.7°N 89.7°W 20 Oct 256+ from 01°N 96°W to 00.3°N 99°W 29 Oct one at 01°S 103.5°W next day. 15+ at 03.5°S 110.5°W 31 Oct five to 06°S 118°W 1 Nov all with the distinctive thrusting flight (DB).

TROPICBIRDS ***Phaethontidae***

Red-billed Tropicbird ***Phaethon aethereus.*** One at 09.6°N 59.7°E 9 Jan 00 five at 11°N 56°E next day (DB).

Red-tailed Tropicbird ***Phaethon rubricauda.*** An immature at 07°S 121°W on 2 Nov adults at 21°S 171°W on 12 Nov 27°S 169°W on 18 Nov 30-5°S 171.5°W next day, 22.5°S 177°W on 23 Nov and off Bega, Fiji on 25 Nov (DB).

Yellow-billed Tropicbird ***Phaethon lepturus.*** Two at 13°S 137°W on 5 Nov one at 17°S 148°W on 7 Nov three off Moorea on 9 Nov one at 18.3°S 155°W next day, 3 at 21°S 171°W on 12 Nov two at 22°S 178°W on 13 Nov one at 23°S 177°W on 23 Nov two at 18°S 172.5°W on 26 Nov, one on board at dawn at 13.6°S 164.5°E on 2 Dec one at 11°S 158°E next day, one off Lae Solomon Sea, 19 Dec two at 09.3°S 112.5°E 27 Dec one of these *P l fulvus* with another at 08°S 107°E next day, two at 09.6°N 63°E on 9 Jan 00 (DB), single birds at 18.4°N 64.7°W and 18.4°N 64.4°W on 15 and 17 Apr 00 (28°C) (JP).

PELICANS ***Pelecanidae***

Brown Pelican ***Pelecanus occidentalis.*** Many at 07.7°N 79.8°W approaching Balboa on 21 Mar (B & EW) about ten along the Panama Canal on 25 Oct (DB), and up to 15 eight times between 18.3-18.7°N 64.4- 64.8°W (28°C) during 13-21 Apr (JP).

Cape Gannet *Morus capensis* - Lamberts Bay, South Africa, 7 March 2000.
Photo: Capt MN Cheshire MN.

GANNETS AND BOOBIES ***Sulidae***

Abbott's Booby ***Papasula abbotti.*** Three adults at 08.3°S 108.9°E off Java and later four at 07.3°S 105.7°E on 28 Dec - one sitting on a log almost allowed itself to be run down, another also sitting on debris, and another diving vertically very distinctive curiously like a Greater Black-backed Gull when seated, with a hunched posture and outstandingly elegant, long-winged and long-bodied with a Concorde fuselage, in the air (DB).

Northern Gannet ***Morus bassanus.*** Recorded 35 times between Gibraltar and Brittany Apr-Jul (13-20°C), most 136 at 40.7°N 08.8°W on 24 May and 127 at 43.9°N 02.8°W on 25 June (JP). 35+ between Dunkerque and Selsey on 10 Oct, 50+ in Le Havre Roads next day. 50 from there to south of Start Point on 13 Oct several hundred in 90 mins at ca 48°N 07°W next day, then 1-2 to 46°N 09°W. Three adults off Cape Bon on 22 Jan '00 one off Almeria in 25 Jan 394 in three hours north of Cape St Vincent, then 505, only 7 subadult to the Berlengas on 26 Jan 145 only one immature, mostly going north, from Cape Finisterre to 45.5°N next day. 455 with only 1-2 immature, between Ushant and Guernsey on 28 Jan three off Texel and one off the Weser Mouth on 29 Jan (DB).

Cape Gannet ***Morus capensis.*** One at 34.3°S 17.5°E on 22 Jan and many at 32.2°S 32.6°E on 24 Jan (B & EW).

Australasian Gannet ***Morus serrator.*** Two off Hobart 17 Feb one at 38.0°S 162.9°E 21 Feb 30+ at 40.1°S 171.7°E next day 18 at 39.5°S 177.0°E 24 Feb (B & EW) ten in the Hauraki Gulf on 20 Nov thinning out to 34.5°S next day (DB).

Masked Booby ***Sula dactylatra.*** Three at 12.4°N 67.6°W on 25 Mar (B & EW). 15+ between 13.5°N 69.5°W-12.5°N 72.5°W on 23 Oct one at 11.7°S 134°W 4 Nov two at 22°S 172°E 15 Nov 27.8°S 169.7°E on 18 Nov and 09.3°S 146°E 21 Nov three at 08.3°S 108.9°E 28 Dec. 21 off Ras Alula, Somalia. 11 Jan 00 ten off Abu Ali and Zubair Is 13 Jan (DB), two at 18.9°N 57.9°E off Ras Al Madraka and one 17.8°N 56.5°E 3 Mar 00(MKB).

Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra* 16° 57°N 53°E - 4 October 1998. *Photo*: CPO S Copsey.

Brown Booby ***Sula leucogaster.*** 46 at 19.9°N 106.4°W on 17 Mar 55 at 10.0°N 87.6°W on 20 Mar and many off Balboa next day (B & EW), four at 16N 63°W on 22 Oct 15 from Panama to 6.7°N 81°W on 26 Oct ten from 05.7°N 84°W to 05°N 86°W on 27 Oct four at 04°N 89°W on 28 Oct one at 22°S 172.5°E on 15 Nov and between Ambryn and Malakula, Vanuatu, 28 Nov 18 between 08°S 151°E and 07.2°S 148°E on 4 Dec one off Ragave Point, Solomon Sea, 20 Dec 140+ from Vitiez Strat to seas off Saidor, Bismarck Sea 6 Dec 20 from Crown I to Narega I 8 Dec three off Watom I 9 Dec 95 from Lolobau I to Kimbe Rds 13 Dec 19 in Vitiaz Strait, 18 Dec 59 from 10.1°S 147.2°E to 09.5°S 145°E, then 13 to NNE Darnley I 21 Dec 16 at10.6°S °15 141°E 22 Dec 14 at 10.7°S 134.1°E on 23 Dec one south of Suma, Indian Ocean, 26 Dec at 09.3°S 112.5°E next day and 10.6°S 105.7°E on 28 Dec 76 around Abu Ali Is 13 Jan 00, one off Gubal I Egypt 16 Jan (DB), and up to ten six times 18.3-18.4°N 64.4-64.8°W (28°C) during 13-21 Apr '00 (JP).

Red-footed Booby ***Sula sula.*** Two at 02.0°S 29-5°W 12 Jan one at 06.1°N 163.5°W 3 Mar and 23.1°N 156.1°W 6 Mar. 50+ at 12.4°N 67.6°W. 25 Mar (B & EW), 7 brown birds at 16°N 63°W 22 Oct ten various morphs from 13.5°N 69.7°W to 13°N 71°W, 23 Oct up to ten immatures with the ship from 05.7°N 84°W to 05°N 86°W, 27 Oct ca 100 including 40 over a shoal at 04°N 89°W, of which at least two were of the Galapagos form with black in the tail of the white morph 28 Oct 15 from 01.5°14 96°W to 00.5°N 98°W 29 Oct 20 at 15.7°S 145°W off NE Tuomotus 6 Nov 22 off Tahiti and 30 in the roads there 6 Nov 75 mostly white-tailed brown morph off Moorea on 9 Nov two dark and one light from 21°S-171°W to 21.5°S 175°W. 12 Nov 93 from 22°S 173°E to 22°S 169°E east of Noumea. 15 Nov 1 white 1 brown off Bega, Fiji, 25 Nov two 11°S 158°E 3 Dec four Lepsius Point to Long I Bismarck Sea 6 Dec two WNW Narega I 8 Dec four Cape Pomas to Rabaul 9 Dec three 10.6°S 141°E on 22 Dec and 09.3°S 112.5°E 27 Dec (DB).

Juv Red Footed Booby *Sula sula* onboard VLCC *Libra Star,* 12° 39.5'N, 62° 4.5°E.
Photo: Capt PA Woods.

CORMORANTS AND SHAGS *Phalacrocoracidae*

European Shag ***Stictocarbo aristotelis.*** Up to 139 a dozen times off western Europe between 42.2°N 08.9°W and 47.8°N 04.4°W (16-18°C) in May-July (JP).

Kenyon's Shag ***Stictocarbo kenyoni.*** This hypothetical species (SS 42:71) may be the female of the *Pelagic Shag S pelagicus*, which is small in the Aleutian Islands (Rohwer *et al* 2000).

Great Cormorant ***Phalacrocorax carbo.*** In contrast to the last, just one at 48.7°N 04.1°W on 5 Jul and ten at 48.7°N 04.1°W on 7 Jul (17°C) (JP). The highly conspicuous southward migration in late autumn has been noticed in both the Caspian Sea (SJH Table 1) and Bay of Biscay (SH & DH Table 2).

FRIGATEBIRDS *Fregatidae*

Christmas Frigatebird ***Fregata andrewsi.*** A female at 08.3°S 108.8°E on 28 Dec (DB).

Magnificent Frigatebird ***Fregate magnificens.*** One at 10.0°N 87.6°W on 20 Mar and several approaching Balboa next day, then present through the Panama Canal (B & EW), where it was also numerous on 25 Oct (DB). Up to twelve seen six times between 18.4-18.5°N 64.4-64.6°W (28°C) over 13-20 Apr 00 (JP).

Great Frigatebird ***Fregata minor.*** Twelve probable birds, ten with boobies over a fish shoal, between 04°N 89°W and 03.2°N 91°W on 28 Oct an adult and immature, 11°S 141.5°W on 4 Nov a second-stage immature with ten other frigates and terns off Bega Fiji, on 25 Nov one off Watom Id Bismarck Sea and two probables in the Vitiaz St and Huon Gulf. 9 Dec one outside the China Strait near Bonarua Is Coral Sea 20 Dec (DB).

Lesser Frigatebird ***Fregata ariel.*** Three off Bali on 9 Feb (B & EW), two in the Vitiaz Strait. Bismarck Sea, 6 Dec one NW from Crown Is 8 Dec and most of 51 Frigates between Watom Id and Rabaul on 9 Dec apparently this species also several of 33 frigates between Lolobau Id and Kimbe Roads on 13 Dec 8 of 19 frigates between Ward Hunt and Goschen Straits, Solomon Sea on 20 Dec. Two at 10.7°S 133°E on 23 Dec. and probably ten off Peusangan Point, Sumatra on 3 Jan 00 (DB).

(There were also unidentified frigates at 09°S 126°W on 3 Nov east of Tahiti on 7 Nov off Hunter I on 15 Nov at 10.6°S 140.7°E on 22 Dec 30 km west of Darwin on 24 Dec around Cartier I on 25 Dec and SW of Sumba on 26 Dec (DB)).

PHALAROPES *Phalaropodidae*

Red (or Grey) Phalarope ***Phalaropus fulicarius.*** Two unidentified phalaropes on the Biscay shelfbreak at ca 47.5°N 5.5°W on 28 Sep and two nearby next day (PM & KC), were probably of this species, the usual one here.

Red-necked Phalarope ***Phalaropus lobatus.*** 114 seen in eight parties of up to 25, Vitiaz Strat west to Saidor, Bismarck Sea. 6 Dec three, Blanche Bay Rabaul. 9 Dec one off Rabaul jetty next day, ten Kimbe Bay. 13 Dec 15 at 07.3°S 105.4°E south of Java. 28 Dec 56 in parties up to eight, south-west of Abd el Kuri. 11 Jan '00 one at 12.3°N 47.2°E next day (DB), a number at 18.9°14 57.9°E off Ras Al Madraka and at 17.8°N 56.5°E on 3 Mar 00 (MKB).

SKUAS AND JAEGERS *Stercorariinae*

Great Skua ***Catharacta skua.*** Three at 37.0°N 06.0°W (19°C) 9.5.99 (JP). 10+ 22nm west of St Anne's Head, Pembroke on 25 Aug (OR). 100 including a group of 20 between 48°14 07°W and 47°N 08°W on 14 Oct one seen close, 16°N 63°W on 22 Oct two off Cape Bon 22 Jan 00 off Punta del Sabrinol and Malaga and one off Gibraltar 25 Jan 00. 22 from Cape St Vincent

to the Berlengas was on 26 Jan 11 from Cape Finisterre to 45.5°N next day. 50 from Ushant to NW Guernsey on 28 Jan (DB) and one between Kristiansand and Gothenburg on 28 Jan 99 (NM).

Southern Skua ***Catharacta (skua) antarctica.*** Two at 34.3°S 17.5°E on 22 Jan (B & EW), and one at 46.3°S 136.6°E (12°C) on 20 Feb 00 and 48.2°S 129.8°E (11°C) next day (NM).

McCormick's (or South Polar) Skua ***Catharacta maccormicki.*** Light birds in the Hauraki Gulf on 21 Nov and at 30.7°S 176°W next day a dark one at 18°S 170.7°E on 26 Nov a light one at 13.6°S 164.5°E on 2 Dec and 10°S 156°E next day six dark and two light between Wasu and Saidor, Bismarck Sea on 6 Dec three dark between Madang and Norega I on 8 Dec one dark outside Blanche Bay, Rabaul next day and two, Kimbe Bay. 13 Dec one N Vitiaz Strait. 18 Dec and Ward Hunt Strait, Solomon Sea next day, two at 10°S 147°E on 21 Dec (DB) nine off Dawson Station 2 Mar '00 three at 66.5°S 67.3°E on 7 Mar six at 68.1°S 76.9°E on 8 Mar nine off Davis Station 9 Mar one at 64.8°S 82.7°E C 12 Mar two at 65.1°S 100.5°E 14 Mar and 64.9°S 106.5°E next day and birds at 65.0°S 110.5°E on 17 Mar and 61.5°S 128.7°E on 19 Mar (all ca -1.5°C) (NM).

Pomarine Skua ***Stercorarius pomarinus.*** Where specified usually light. One at 19.9°N 106.4°W on 17 Mar and 14.6°N 95.0°W on 19 Mar (B and EW), 43°N 13°W on 15 Oct 39°N 20.5°W next day, 16°N 63°W. 22 Oct 10.8°N 76.5°W on 24 Oct 03.5°N 91°W on 28 Oct 07.5°S 120.7°W on 2 Nov 09°S 126°W next day, 14.7°S 142.4°W on 6 Nov 21°S 171°W on 12 Nov 27.7°S 169.6°E going SW on 18 Nov 18°S 173°E on 26 Nov three in the Vitiaz Strait Bismarck Sea on 6 Dec 11 light an intermediate and nine uncertain between Madang and Narega I 8 Dec 10-35 between Lolobau I and Kimbe Bay. 13 Dec two in the Vitiaz Strait. 18 Dec 31-39, six with full tails, in Ward Hunt Strait, Solomon Sea 20 Dec 28-31, four dark five with full tails, between 10°S-147.4°E and 09.7°S 146°E next day and five one intermediate, from 09.6°N 63°E to 10°N 60.3°E on 9 Jan 00 (DB).

Arctic Skua ***Stercorarius parasiticus.*** Two dark birds in Le Havre Roads on 11 Oct and one off Abu Ali Is Red Sea on 13 Jan 00 (DB).

GULLS ***Larinae***

Lesser Black-backed Gull ***Larus fuscus.*** Up to four seen five times between 36.0°N 05.6°W on 5 May and 46.5°N 01.8°W in May-July (16-19°C), with 50-100 at 48.7°N 04.1°W on 7 July (JP) a subadult SW of Abd el Kuri on 11 Jan '00. 14 near Abu Ali Is on 13 Jan, an adult at 18.7 N 39.8 E next day, two entering the Gulf Suez and 60 with fishing vessels entering Suez Roads on 16 Jan 21 thence to Ismailia next day 35 adults and 5 immatures off northern Algeria west to Cape Tenes on 24 Jan two off Almeria next day. 503 Fuscus in three hours north of Cape St Vincent and 195 in an hour south of the Berlengas on 26 Jan 30 still mostly *fuscus* from Cape Finisterre NE to 45.5°N on 27 Jan 103 from Ushant to Guernsey next day, and 23 from Cap Gris Nez to Rotterdam on 29 Jan (DB).

Yellow-legged Gull ***Larus cachinnans.*** 150-200 at 36.6°N 04.2°W on 30 Apr and 20-50,000 off Gibraltar on 2 May (17°C) (JP). Three in the Gulf of Suez and then 250+ with fishing vessels N to Suez Roads on 16 Jan '00 then 300 dark-backed birds (possibly *L. armenicus?*) to Ismailia on 18 Jan with 500+ moving south to roost by the new bridge, four off Pantellaria. 150 with trawlers off Cape Bon on 22 Jan then small numbers off North Africa and south Spain, one off the Berlengas on 26 Jan and three from Finisterre to 44°N on 27 Jan (DB).

Herring Gull ***Larus argentatus.*** ca 25 between 48°N 7°W and 47°N 08°W on 14 Oct two at 41°N 17°W next day and a juvenile at 29°N 44°W on 19 Jan 51 between Cape Gris Nez and Rotterdam on 29 Jan '00 (DB).

Glaucous-winged Gull ***Larus glaucescens.*** Five at 46.4°N 129.1°W on 10 Mar and flocks off Vancouver on 12 Mar (B & EW).
Glaucous Gull ***Larus hyperboreus.*** An immature off Vancouver on 12 Mar (B & EW).
Great Black-backed Gull ***Larus marinus.*** Two at 47.6°N 06.7°W on 4 Apr (B & EW), two at 41.5°N 10.9°W on 6 May (HMS *Scott*), 16 at 47.5°N 03.5°W on 1 July and six at 47.8°N 04.4°W on 4 July (both 16°C) (JP), and several at ca 48°N 07°W on 14 Oct (DB).
Kelp Gull ***Larus dominicans.*** Two at 34.3°S 17.5°E on 21 Jan and 30+ in Auckland Harbour on 20-21 Nov with a nest on a warehouse roof on Freyburg Wharf (DB).
Sooty Gull ***Larus hemprichi.*** An immature SW of Abd el Kuri on 11 Jan '00 and two adults near the Abu Ali Is on 13 Jan (DB).
Laughing Gull ***Larus atricilla.*** Up to 100 eight times between 18.4-18.5°N 64.4-64.7°W (28°C) during 13-21 May (JP), several at 07.7°N 79.8°W approaching Balboa on 21 Mar (B & EW), none there 26 Oct but an adult E at 05.5°N 84°E next day (DB).
Franklin's Gull ***Larus pipixcan.*** Several at 07.7°N 79.8°W approaching Balboa on 21 Mar (B & EW).
Mediterranean Gull ***Larus melanocephalus.*** One at 36°N 16°E on 21 Jan 00, five off Cape Bon with trawlers next day, nine adults and an immature off Algeria to Cape Tenes on 24 Jan 37 adults and an immature between Punta del Sabinel and Malaga, where 300 with trawler, 25 Jan three off Gibraltar on 25 Jan and 150+ mostly adult, with trawlers in three hours north from Cape St Vincent, with the last at 35°N next day (DB).
Silver Gull ***Larus novaehollandiae.*** Two off Noumea on 16 Nov and 100 in Noumea Harbour next day (DB).
Black-headed Gull ***Larus ridibundus.*** An adult E at 39°N 21°W on 16 Oct ca 100 with fishing boats in the Gulf Suez on 16 Jan 00 ca 2000 in Suez Roads next day and again on the way to Ismailia on 18 Jan and one at 35°N 19°E on 21 Jan (DB).
Little Gull ***Larus minutus.*** Ten east of the Contentin Peninsula on 13 Oct (DB). The destination of the remarkable numbers seen on migration in the Caspian Sea (SJH. Table 1) is unclear: unlike other seabird migrants seen there they are rare in the Persian/Arabian Gulf, but numbers winter in the Nile Delta and off European coasts, where Hales and Hallett (1994. Table 2) have seen a large return movement past Brittany in late March.
Black-legged Kittiwake ***Rissa tridactyla.*** Three from Dunkerque to Selsey 10 Oct ten off Le Havre next day 20+ east of the Contentin Peninsula 13 Oct four between Cape Bon and Bizerte 22 Jan '00 one off Almeria 5 Jan 00 in three hours north from Cape St Vincent and another 1400 to the Berlengas on 26 Jan 36 from Cape Finisterre NNE to 45.5°N on 27 Jan 510 from Ushant to Guernsey 28 Jan '00 thinning out from the west. 225 from Cape Gris Nez to Rotterdam on 29 Jan 207+ from Texel to the Elbe Mouth on 30 Jan (DB), four at 46.4°N 129°1W on 10 Mar and some at 43.3°N 124.5°W on 13 Mar (B & EW).

TERNS ***Sterninae***
Black Tern ***Chlidonias niger.*** Several at 07.7°N 79.8°W approaching Balboa on 21 Mar (B & EW), 50+ at 36.6°N 04.2°W on 30 Apr and smaller numbers six more times up the west coast of Europe to 41.5°N 08.8°W in Apr and May (17-20 C) (JP).
Caspian Tern ***Sterna caspia.*** Two off Darien, 24 Oct one off Brown's Bay, Auckland, 20 Nov and an immature in the Malacca Strait 70km west of Singapore, 2 Jan 00 (DB).

White Cheeked Tern *Sterna repressa* - Balisain Port, May 1998. *Photo*: CPO S Copsey.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo.* One or two seen four times between 36.7°N 03.0°W and 47.5°N 03.5°W 16 Apr-Jul (16-18°C) (JP). Numbers of 'comic' terns usually identified as this species were seen off SE Asia, but they present problems because it is now known that among other species the Aleutian Tern *S aleutica* also winters here (SS 47: 34) in difficult plumages. They include 120+ between Lepsius Point and Long I in the Bismarch Sea on 6 Dec five in Blanche Bay Rabaul on 9 Dec 112+ in Kimbe Bay on 13 Dec three at the east end of the Vitiaz Strait on 18 Dec. one with a Black-naped Tern *S sumatrana* and 30 distant terns in the China Strait. Coral Sea on 20 Dec 115+ in the distance at 10.7°S 141°E on 22 Dec 1000 terns, some also Black-naped, leaving Panjang Harbour in the Sunda Strait in the evening as the fishing boats came in on 29 Dec 46 off Singapore, 1 Jan 00 50+ off Cape Jambair, Sumatra on 3 Jan and 20 Common or White-cheeked Terns *S repressa* off the Abu Ali Is on 13 Jan (DB).
Arctic Tern *Sterna paradisaea.* One at 64.8°S 82.7°E (0.5-1.5°C) on 12 Mar 00 (NM).
Antarctic Tern *Sterna vittata.* One at 66.2°S 63.0°E on 1 Mar '00 22 and 21 uncertain at 66.5°S 67.3°E on 7 Mar 33 at 66.9°S 77.1°E on 11 Mar 23 at 64.8°S 82.7°E next day, one at 64.4°S 92.0°E on 13 Mar one at 65.1°S 100.5°E on 14 Mar, twenty at 64.9°S 106.5°E on 15 Mar and nine at 65.0°S 110.5°E on 17 Mar (-1.7-0.5°C) (NM).
Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii.* One possible adult at 16°N 63°W on 22 Oct and thirty at 10.7°S 133°E on 23 Dec (DB).
Black-naped Tern *Sterna sumatrana.* At least one in the China Strait, Coral Sea on 20 Dec and some among 1000 terns seen leaving Panjang Harbour, Sunda Strait as fishing boats came in in the evening on 29 Dec (DB).
Grey-backed Tern *Sterna lunata.* Two at 12.5°S 136.5°W on 5 Nov and 12+ at 15°S 142.5°W next day (DB).

Bridled Tern ***Sterna anaethetus.*** Twenty SSW at 16°N 63°W on 22 Oct ten SSW at 18°S 173°E on 26 Oct 19 between Lepsius Point and Long I Bismarck Sea on 6 Dec at least one NW of Narega I 8 Dec 25 in E Vitiaz Strait on 18 Dec at least two in the Ward Hunt Strait, Solomon Sea. 20 Dec present among 40 terns at 00.2°N 106.2°E on 31 Dec one off Cape Jambair, Sumatra, 2 Jan 00 and near the Zubair Is Red Sea, on 13 Jan (DB).

Sooty Tern ***Sterna fuscata.*** One at 05.6°S 116°W on 1 Nov 60 terns mainly this species. 11.7°S 134°W 4 Nov 64 between 13°S 136°W and 13.5°S 139°W on 5 Nov 13+ at 14.7°S 142.5°W 6 Nov two at 18.5°S 155°W on 10 Nov. 3+ between 21°S 171°W and 21.5°S 175°W on 12 Nov 125 at 22°S 172°E near Hunter I on 15 Nov 24 between 25°S 167.5°E and 27.8°S 169.7°E on 18 Nov one at 30.5°S 171.5°E on 19 Nov and 30.7°S 176°E on 22 Nov. 5+ alt 25°S 177.5°E 23 Nov 21+ off Bega, Fiji on 25 Nov 15+ at 18°S 172.8°E 26 Nov three at 12.6°S 161.8°E on 2 Dec, 211 between 11°S 158°E and 10.5°S 157°E on 3 Dec, 25 between 10.2°S 127.3°E and 09.7°S 146°E on 21 Dec, two off the Trobriand Is on 4 Dec 5+ in Ward Hunt Strait, Solomon Sea on 20 Dec 25 between Vitiaz Strait and Long I Bismarck Sea, 6 Dec 19 NW of Narega I 8 Dec, six in Blanche Bay, Rabaul 9 Dec 147 from Lolobau I to Kimbe Roads, 13 Dec one E Vitiaz Strait, 18 Dec 15 north of Portlock Reefs, Gulf of Papua, 21 Dec 220 from 10.7°S 141°E to 10.7°S 138.2°E on 22 Dec three at 12.5°S 126.2°E on 25 Dec four south of Sumba on 26 Dec 250 adults and immatures, then 190, 09.6°S 63°E 9 Dec (DB).

In October and November 1997 Ken Simmons and Robin Prytherch (1998) visited Ascension during the course of a Nino with world-wide repercussions, and found that a Sooty Tern breeding cycle had failed. It is therefore of interest that John Hughes (1999) reports that the Army Bird-watching Society has estimated the size of the Sooty Tern population there as 176,000 in March 1990, 202, 000 in November 1996 and 207,000 in June 1998, so that the adult population does not appear to have been adversely affected, though the failure of the young recruits lost in 1997 to return to breed would probably not have been evident yet.

Mixed deep sea terns, probably mainly the last two, also include 150 between 09°S 126°W and 09.5°S 127°W on 3 Nov 54 at 14.7°S 142.5°W and 32 between Lepsius Point and Long I Bismarck Sea on 6 Nov 23 between Crown and Narega Is 8 Dec, 583 between Lolobau I and Kimbe Roads on 13 Dec 99 in Vitiaz Strait on 18 Dec 36 in Ward Hunt Strait, Solomon Sea, on 20 Dec 72 at 10.2°S 146°E on 21 Dec 57 between Portlock Reefs and Great Barrier, Gulf

White Cheeked Tern *Sterna repressa* - Balisain Port, May 1998. *Photo:* CPO S Copsey.

of Papua, 21 Dec 157 between 10.7°S 141°E and 10.7°S 138.2°E on 22 Dec 20 at 04.2°S 108.5°E on 30 Dec 40 including Bridled at 00.2°N 106.2°E on 31 Dec and 190, perhaps all Sooty, at 09.6°N 63°E on 9 Jan 00 (DB).

Little Tern ***Sterna albifrons.*** Five in Madang Harbour, Bismarck Sea, 7 Dec two Kimbe Harbour, 16 Dec three S China Strait, Coral Sea 20 Dec 26 off Cape Jambair, Sumatra 3 Jan 00 (DB).

Least Tern ***Sterna antillarum.*** One off Panama, 26 Oct (DB).

Swift Tern ***Sterna bergii.*** One off Hobart, 17 Feb (B & EW), 3-4 off Papeete, Tahiti 7-9 Nov one off Moorea 9 Nov Noumea, 16 Nov and Bega, Fiji 25 Nov three off Santo, Vanuatu, 28 Nov one off Lusancay Reefs, Solomon Sea, 4 Dec five between Lepsius Strait and Long I Bismarck Sea 6 Dec one off Madanz, 8 Dec nine between Cape Pomas and Rabaul, 9 Dec one in Ward Hunt and Goschen Straits, Solomon Sea and end China Strait, Coral Sea, 20 Dec 15 between 10.7°S 141°E-10.7°S 140°E. 22 Dec two west of Darwin, 24 Dec three in a large flock of terns off Cartier Is, Timor Sea, 25 Dec several in Panjang Harbour, Sunda Strait, 29 Dec two at 04°S 108.8°E and three at 01.7°S 108.5°E off Karimata I 30 Dec one E Singapore Strait, 31 Dec and one in Suez Roads on 17 Jan 00 (DB).

Royal Tern ***Sterna maxima.*** Several seen 18.3-18.4°N 64.4 64.8°W 14-18 Apr (JP), one in the Gulf of Panama, 26 Oct (DB).

Lesser Crested Tern ***Sterna bengalensis.*** Three at 10.7°S 141°E, 22 Dec one in Panjang Harbour, Sunda Strait, on 29 Dec one E Singapore Strait 31 Dec and seven at the west end 2 Jan 00 two off Cape Jambar, Sumatra 3 Jan (DB).

Sandwich Tern ***Sterna sandvicensis.*** Seen nine times up the west coast of Europe between 38.6°N 09.4°W on 18 May and 47.5°N 03.5°W on 1 Jul (16-18°C), and twice at 18.4°N 64.4-5°W (28°C) in Apr '00 (JP), 45 in Suez Roads 17-18 Jan '00 and two at 35.1°N 19°E on 21 Jan (DB).

Brown Noddy ***Anous stolidus.*** Twenty at 16°N 63°W on 22 Oct four over flying fish at 05.6°S 116°W and then a Killer Whale at 06°S 118°W on 1 Nov one at 13°S 137°W on 5 Nov 38+ in a tern flock at 14.7°S 142.5°W on 6 Nov 71 at 17°S 148°W east of Tahiti and 30+ in Tahiti Roads. 7 Nov 11 near and west of, Hunter I 15 Nov. one at 24.8°S 167.5°E 18 Nov two at 23°S 177°E. 23 Nov 25+ off Bega, Fiji, on 25 Nov 13+ at 11°S 158°E on 3 Dec two between Lepsius Strait and Long I Bismarck Sea. 11 NW of Narega Island and one off Crown Id 8 Dec four in Blanche Bay, Rabaul 9 Dec. 32+ from Lolobau I to Kimbe Roads. 13 Dec at least one in tern flocks in Vitiaz Strait, 18 Dec two in Ward Hunt Strait, Solomon Sea, 20 Dec and seven from 10.2°S 147.3°E to 10.3°S 146°E, 21 Dec (DB).

Black Noddy ***Anous minutus.*** One or two with Brown Noddies at 17°S 148°W east of Tahiti, and then 200+ in Tahiti Roads 7 Nov 102 off Moorea 9 Nov four NW of Crown I Bismarck Sea, and three west of Narega I 8 Dec at least one in Vitiaz Strait 18 Dec four in Ward Hunt Strait, one in Goschen Strait and five off south end China Strait, Coral Sea 20 Dec and one at 10°S 147°E on 21 Dec (DB).

Blue-grey Noddy ***Procelsterna cerulea.*** Three at 09.5°S 127.5°W on 3 Nov and two near Hunter I on 15 Nov (DB).

White Tern ***Gygis alba.*** Two at 20.0°S 173.5°W on 27 Feb (B & EW) and at 30.5°S 171.5°E on 1 Nov one at 07°S 121°W next day, 271+ at 14.7°S 142.5°W and then 145 in sight of an atoll at 15.6°S 145°W on 6 Nov a few east of Tahiti and 50 in Papeete Roads on 7 Nov 32 off Moorea 9 Nov one at 19.6°S 163°W, 11 Nov 107+ from 21°S 171°W to 21.5°S 175°W east of Tonga. 12 Nov. one at 22°S 173°E, 15 Nov a few in Noumea Lagoon, 16 Nov 15 at 27.8°S

169.6°E. 18 Nov three at 23°S 177°E. 23 Nov 13+ at Bega, Fiji. 25 Nov 27 inside reef at Port Vila, Vanuatu. 27 Nov 77+ west of Narega I Bismarck Sea. 8 Dec two Lolobau I to Kimbe Roads 13 Dec (DB).

ALCIDS *Alcidae*

Razorbill ***Alca torda***. Three NW Cape St Vincent 26 Jan '00 seven Ushant-Roscof. 28 Jan 31 Belgian coast to Rotterdam. 29 Jan 17 Texel to Elbe Mouth 30 Jan (DB).

Little Auk ***Alle alle.*** Five between Kristiansand and Gothenburg 7 Dec (NM). 10+ Weser to Elbe Mouth. 30 Jan 00 (DB).

In 1965 scepticism was aroused by a report by Lt RG Menzies (SS 17:80) that he had seen from a submarine a bird which appeared to be a Little Auk swimming 150ft below ten feet of Artic ice. Falk et al (2000) now report that Dovekies have been found to carry depth recorder down to 34.7m.

Common Guillemot ***Uria aalge.*** Possibly six at 47.8°N 04.4°W off Brittany on 4 Jul and one at 48.7°N 04.1°W next day (16-17°C) (JP), four at 38°N off Portugal, 26 Jan '00, seven between Ushant-Roscoff 28 Jan 21 from Belgium to Rotterdam, 29 Jan 21 Texel to Elbe Mouth 30 Jan (DB).

Atlantic Puffin ***Fratercula arctica.*** Five at 36.6°14 04.2°W on 30 Apr and again 36.0°N 05.6°W on 5 May (17-18°C) (JP), seven NW of Roscoff on 28 Jan 00 one off the Hook of Holland on 29 Jan and eight off Texel on 30 Jan (DB).

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Table 1: Average seabirds/day seen by Chief Engineer S J Hingston in the oilfield safety vessel mv *Tabriz Khalilbevli* at 40°05'N 51°15'E in the Caspian Sea in 1998 (of *Sea Swallow* 48:23 for 1998).

Month:	Jan	Mar	Apr	Jun	Jul	Nov	Dec	Total
Days	13	17	10	7	9	24	24	104
Great Cormorant								
Phalacrocorax carbo	1.62	3.76	3.20	2.29	1.11	31.8	3.37	988
Pomarine Skua								
S. pomarinus	0.08	0.76	1.50					29
Arctic Skua								
S. parasiticus		0.12	1.10			0.29		20
Little Gull								
Larus minutus	38.0	423	28.6	0.14	0.22	359	15.2	16957
Mediterranean Gull								
Larus melanocephalus		0.24						4
Slender-billed Gull								
Larus genei							0.04	1
Black-headed Gull								
Larus ridibundus	78.5	171	200		0.67	589	160	23923
Pallas' Gull								
Larus ichthyaetus	1.92	1.24	0.40			6.54	4.25	309
Common Gull								
Larus canus			0.10					1
Yellow-legged Gull								
Larus cachinnans	52.0	44.7	22.5	58.0	27.8	43.5	118	6193
Armenian Gull								
Larus armenicus	123	80.6	51.0	4.14	8.56	87.5	21.1	6198
Lesser Black-backed G								
Dark Larus fuscus		3.18	1.00		0.22	1.96	1.87	156
Pale Larus fuscus		39.8	70.00					1370
Unspec. Larus fuscus			10.5		0.56	4.62	2.04	270
Larus sp	76.9					53.2	104	4700
Black-legged Kittiwake								
Rissa tridactyla	0.77		0.20			0.13	1.21	44
Gull-billed Tern								
Sterna nilotica					7.89			71
Caspian Tern								
Sterna caspia					0.33			3
Sandwich Tern								
Sterna sandvicensis			401	250	428			9608
Common Tern								
Sterna hirundo			13.0	77.1	103			2320
Little Tern								
Sterna albifrons			0.20		0.22			4
White-winged Tern								
Chlidonias leucopterus					1.11			1
Average birds/day	373	769	804	389	659	1175	431	708
Total birds	4854	13065	8043	2724	5929	28192	10345	73152

Table 2: Birds seen crossing the Bay of Biscay. 1993-2000

Observers	**H&H**	**H&H**	**H&H**	**H&H**	**Cs**	**PC**	**S**	**H&H**
Date	29-31	29-31	27-29	15-17	16-18	14-17	18-20	20-22
	3.93	3.95	4.95	5.00	8.98	8.99	8.99	8.97
Route	P1-S	P1-S	P1-S	P1-S	Po-B	Po-B	Po-B	P1-S
Mins	840	1200	1080			1229		1130
N Fulmar	907	1173	52	72	12	5		9
Cory's Sh	1			1	1-2	226	2172+	5
Great Sh					280	409	1140+	5
Large sh						250	30	
Sooty Sh						2	5	
Balearic Sh						2	2	
Manx Sh	179		37	5	1	4	11	
Smaller sh							4	
Little Sh					1	5	6	
European S-p					3	36	1	
Leach's S-p							1	
Storm-p sp					4	4	7	
Gannet ad	693	516	131	160	+	+	500	438
imm	54	53	50	102			?	106
Cormorant	4		1					
Shag	1							
Shagmorant	15							
Great Skua	59	50	5	7	7	9	6	15
Pomarine Skua						1		
Arctic Skua						1	7	2
GBB Gull ad	128	38	50			2+	?	575
imm.	20	4	3					?
LBB G. ad	457	476	49	121	10	+	?	99
imm.	12	2	2	63				?
H/ YL G. ad	113	10	7	3	10+	+	100s	6
imm.	80	8	2	34				
BH Gull	8							
Med Gull	10							
Little Gull	1939							
Sabine's G	2				4-7	2	6	
Kittiwake ad	368	451	3	3	2	2	+	
imm	14	7		4				
Sandwich T	6		3					11
Common Tern						12		
Arctic Tern			6	5				55
Terns sp					8	13		
Black Tern						4	2	
Guillemot	60		10	1				
Razorbill	31	2						
Puffin	34							
auk sp.	18	12						
Grey Phal							2	
Whale		1	1					2
Dolphin			6					
Porpoise	+							8
Cetaceans							177	82
Grey Seal							1	
Basking Shk	1		1					
Total	5214	3054	419	577	340	956	4000+	1770
Per hour	372	155	23			47		89

Observers	**H&H**	**Js**	**Cs**	**H&H**	**H&H**	**H&H**	
Date	6-8	15-17	28. 9-31	11-13	14-16	27-29	
	9.93	9.98	10.99	10.92	10.98	10.96	
Route	P1-S	Po-B	Po-B	P1-S	P1-S	P1-S	
Mins	1080	1570	960	1100	920	1020	
Fulmar	54	29				4	
Cory's Sh	8	24	60	2	1		
Great Sh		34	1042+	19			
Large sh			2				
Sooty Sh	6	7	2	2	1		
Balearic Sh	38	3		1	10		
Manx Sh	29	6	3		7		
Little Sh				1			
European S-p		1	23				
Leach's S-p		2	6		1	6	
Storm-p sp			8				
Gannet ad	113	1562	82	748	2041	813	
imm	55	?	?	85	159	158	
unspec	322						
Cormorant				83	1		
Shag	4			3			
Great Skua	109	168	15	9	50	95	
Pomarine S.	4		1				
Arctic Skua	22		4	2	1	25	
Long-t Skua	1					1	
Skua sp			1				
GBB Gull ad		3	3	905	39	4	
imm.	4	?	?	?	57	?	
LBB G. ad	30	1	50				
imm.	24	?	?		15		
unspec							
H/ YL G. ad	4			137	4	2	
imm.	13			?	6	?	
Iceland G						1	
BH Gull					15		
Med Gull				1			
Little Gull	2	12	1	4			
Sabine's G			11			3	
Kittiwake ad	11			105	6	13	
imm	1			?	6	12	
Sandwich T	6	8					
Common Tern	34	10	2				
Arctic Tern		1	1				
Tern sp	3	23	11				
Black Tern	1	2					
Guillemot				9		42	
Razorbill				3		21	
Puffin				40		48	
Auk sp				12	7	71	
Phalaropes		2	2				
Total	989	2915	306	2167	2412	1325	
Per hour		55	111	21	118	157	78

Observers: PC. Peter Cartwright. Cs- Mike and Karen Cartwright. H&H Stephen Hales & Derek Hallett. J&J- Mr & Mrs I.G Johnson. S- Scott (2000). Routes: Po-B. PortsmouthBilbao. P1-S. Plymouth-Santander. Full English and scientific names will be found in the text.

Table 3: Latitude in which birds were positively identified at sea during twelve voyages between Britain and Spain.

Area	Channel	Brittany		Shelf	Ocean		Shelf	Spain
°N latitude	50-51	49-50	48-49	47-48	46-47	45-46	44-45	43-44
Hours	8	57	36	34	8	19	29	20
Fulmar	138	269	315	5		1	1	
Cory's Sh	1	7	26	38	47	95	128	331
Sooty Sh		3	1	1		2		2
Great Sh	1			20	342	1165+	13	
Sooty Sh	1	9	5	1		2	4	2
Balearic Sh		1			3		39	11
Manx Sh		42	12		1	4	30	29
Little Sh					2	5		
European S-p	1	23					1	
Leach's S-p		5				1	5	4
Gannet	1100	4905	865	225	12	9	40	255
Cormorant	4		74	3			2	1
Shag	4		3				55	
Great Skua	70	282	77	63	6	3	5	16
Pomarine S	2	2	23	4			2	1
Arctic Skua	7	16	3		1		1	8
Long-tailed S		1	1	1				
GBB Gull	952	83	442	95			14	68
LBB Gull	40	378	142	158			22	72
Herring/Y1- G	25	6		51			4	104
Iceland Gull			1					
BH Gull							12	3
Med Gull								1
Little Gull							1	36
Sabine'S G		13		1	3	2	7	1
Kittiwake	14	80	105	410		2	1	1
Sandwich T	6	6					2	3
Common Tern		12	5				9	32
Arctic Tern	1	1						6
Black Tern							1	4
Guillemot	111	155	46					
Razorbill	11	1	11	3			1	
Puffin		5	71	12				
Phalaropes				2		2		
Total	2350	6305	229	1073	96	467	1552	1060
Birds/hr	294	111	62	32	12	25	54	53

(Sh- shearwater. S-p- storm-petrel. etc: full English and scientific names given in the text. Positions calculated from time of observation during the voyage: much of the Bay of Biscay is usually crossed at night. Some counts included many birds feeding around trawlers, while others omitted the commoner species. One voyage encountered an influx of shearwaters to the shelfbreak off Spain: on other voyages listed in Table 2 comparable numbers occurred off Brittany.)

LANDBIRDS FROM SHIPS AT SEA
Analysis by Michael Casement

It is regretted that this year's analysis is extremely brief for a number of reasons. As last year, pride of place for records received must go to Chief Engineer S.J. Hingston MN, who submitted another mammoth report of landbirds recorded during 1998 aboard MV *Tabriz Khalilbeyli* in the same fixed position 40.0°N 51.4°E, S Caspian Sea. He and I, together with Stan Howe, have spent a considerable time inputting these records for both 1997 and 1998 into a computer database so that both years can be sorted electronically. These records are exemplary, complete with full weather data and identification details and are now in a usable form for detailed analysis. But we have not yet decided how best to do this, and time and space has not permitted publication this year. In brief, the 1998 records are directly comparable, and of a similar scale and variety as published last year in *Sea Swallow 48*: 32-35.

Sadly, the number and quality of landbird records received this year do not justify the normal analysis by sea areas. The only other landbird report sheets received were from Captain N.G. Cheshire MN, RV *Franklin* who submitted eight sheets from six voyages in 1999, and one in 2000. These included passages from Darwin, Queensland, to conduct survey work west of the Andaman Islands and returning via Singapore and Torres Strait.

A list of landbirds recorded on a round the world trip aboard MV *Teignbank*, October 1999 - January 2000, was received from David Ballance, but these lack any identification details or precise locations. I am very grateful to Sarah North, Editor of *The Marine Observer* for a continuing flow of Met Log reports, but the pressure of other commitments has not permitted me to complete their analysis in time for this issue.

This analysis is comparable to previous years but covers one sea area only.

Brown Shrike *Lanius cristantus* 7° 52'E, 25 September 1999.
Photo: Capt N.G. Cheshire MN.

SECTION I - PACIFIC, CHINA SEA, YELLOW SEA, CORAL SEA AND PHILIPPINE SEA

1998

I am grateful to Michael Adams of the Natural History Museum, Tring, for his identification of a photograph recently received from the Met Office, taken off New Britain, Papua New Guinea (PNG), in October 98 aboard MV *Matilde*, on passage from Newcastle, NSW to Taiwan. It was almost certainly an Arctic Warbler *Phylloscopus borealis* which breeds in the Siberian Arctic and winters in SE Asia.

1999

On 24 April, NGS recorded two Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* at 20.3°S 156°E, 38mn NNE Great Barrier Reef, and on 28 April a White-faced Heron *Ardea novaehollandiae* at 20.9°S 153.0°E. On 29th a Welcome Swallow *Hirundo neoxena* was sighted aboard at 21.1°S 153.0°E, 12nm east of Elusive Reef, 154nm NE Port Clinton, Queensland. On 2 May a Welcome Swallow was seen 19.6°S 150.7°E, 126nm NE Mackay, Queensland.

Spotted Crake *Porzana porzana*, 23° 31'N, 53° 59'E, 24 April 1998.
Photo: CPO S Copsey.

In the Bay of Bengal, at 1900 on 22 September a Yellow Wagtail *Motacilla flava* (identified as adult female of the *beema* race) was sighted aboard 240nm west of South Andaman Islands (12.1° 88.5°E). It remained aboard overnight, but disappeared soon after 0700 on 23rd. A Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*, was aboard at 1250 on 23rd, also a Whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus* calling and circling the ship, at 1315 at 11.8°N 88.5°E, 237mn west of Andaman Islands.

At 1245 on 24 September, in the Andaman Sea, (Posn 10.6°N 90.9°E, 87nm west of Little Andaman Is), a Yellow Wagtail was identified as adult male *M. f. beema* by grey head, white supercilium and dark grey cheeks and ear-coverts, green back and bright yellow underparts.

At 0730 on 25th an adult male Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea* was aboard at 10.6°N 94.3°E, 60nm NE Camorta I, Nicobar Group. The wind was NW/15-20kts. At 1430 a Brown Shrike *Lanias cristanus*, (identified as adult F), was aboard at 7.9°N 95.8°E. 123nm ENE Nicobar Is.

Small groups of Barn Swallows were seen migrating across Malacca Strait 0800-1600 on 27 September. A total of about 70 were seen throughout the day, usually in groups of 4-8.

On 17 October a Pacific Golden Plover *Pluvialis fulva*, identified as a male in non-breeding plumage, was aboard 1700-1800 at 12.5°S 126.7°E.

In the Gulf of Carpentaria, 15.0°S 141.3°E (22nm WSW Cape York Peninsula) on 27 November, following extensive rain squalls, a Great Egret *Ardea alba* circled the ship several times, and was clearly seen in the floodlights at 2230; two Pied Herons *Ardea picata* were seen circling at 2350. Also sighted were several unidentified waders, and a flock of five ducks, possibly White-headed (Radjah) Shelduck *Tadoma radjah*. The wind was ENE/15.

On 7 December, NGS identified a Buff-banded Rail *Gallirallus philippensis* briefly aboard at 1215 at 15.0°S 13 9.8°E, 100mn ENE Mitchell River, (west coast of Cape York Peninsula).

2000

In the Coral Sea on 15 January NGS saw a Little Egret at 12.6°S 149.0°E, 137nm SSW Ava Point, PNG. The wind was ESE/5. On 6 Feb he identified a flock of 20 Pied Imperial Pigeons *Ducula bicolor* 5nm south of PNG at 10.7°S 150.6°SE, flying towards the mainland. The wind was SE/15.

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Dene Cottage, West Harting,
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Yellow-bellied Green Pigeon (Bruce's Green Pigeon) *Trevon waalia*, 12° 23'N 44° 41'E, 6 October 1998. *Photo:* S Copsey.

Sea Swallow 49 (2000)

EXPEDITION REPORT DIEGO SURVEY 97

4-18 August 1997
by WO1 (RSM) Peter Carr Royal Marines

PART TWO - THE LANDBIRDS

ABSTRACT

Sea Swallow 47 (SS47) detailed Part One of the Diego Survey 97 expedition report, covering the primary objective of the trip, the seabirds. This, the second and final part of the expedition report covers all other birds observed.

LANDBIRDS: AN OVERVIEW

Bourne (1971) speculated that prior to mans arrival to the Chagos, when the islands were still forested, there may have been a rich landbird community comparable to that of Christmas Island further east. Since Mr GC Bournes' expedition in 1886, the Chagos and in particular Diego Garcia, has received enough ornithological attention for it to be said with certainty that this is now not true. The Chagos Archipelago is not a species rich area for landbirds.

There are no indigenous passerines resident on the Chagos Archipelago. Of the non-passerines (excluding seabirds), with the exception of Little Green Heron *Butorides striatus*, White-breasted Waterhen *Amaurornis phoenicurus* and since at least 1995, a single Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* all the resident non-passerines are thought to be introductions.

Bourne (1971) further comments on the strategic position of the Chagos to receive migrants, as well as vagrants; this is certainly true. With the exception of the introductions and the three species mentioned which are thought to be natural arrivals, all other landbird species are either migrants or vagrants. The difficulty, due to the paucity of ornithological data from the area, is defining which category, regular migrant or vagrant a species falls in to.

METHODS

Different methods were employed to census different species. In general, waders were counted at high-tide at all known wader haunts around the island. An estimated island total for Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* was arrived at by counting birds as they flew in to roost at a newly discovered breeding colony. White-breasted Waterhens were assessed by counting territories. Doves, mynahs and fodies were assessed by teams counting the total number seen as they drove from one end of the island to the other.

RESULTS

The survey work undertaken on Diego Garcia and its three islets, between 4-18 August 1997 recorded 19 species of landbirds. No new species were recorded for the area, however Grey-tailed Tattler, Pacific Golden Plover and Red-necked Stint have been recorded less than three times previously (Symens 1996, Carr 1996). An accurate count was carried out of the total Cattle Egret population on Diego Garcia, as well as the number of pairs breeding in August. This expedition agrees with published literature that the subspecies of Little Green Heron should be *albolimbatus* (Ripley 1969). The subspecies of White-breasted Waterhen which appears to have colonised Diego Garcia in the last ten years has been ascertained as *maldivus*, which some authors lump with the nominate (del Hayo *et al* 1996, Taylor & Perlo 1998).

SYSTEMATIC LIST

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Very common introduced resident. Found throughout the entire island and is particularly numerous in damp patches around the airfield and golf course. The largest single flock noted was 263 on the airfield on 9 Aug. As in 1996 (Carr 1996), the breeding colony reported by Loustau-Lalanne (1962) at East Point was not located and is probably no longer extant. However, a breeding colony was discovered at Point Marrianne. A total of 16 birds were sitting on nests, apparently incubating. On the evening of 15 Aug the breeding colony area was surrounded by observers and the number of egrets returning to the communal roost from throughout the island were counted; a total of 386 returned to roost. It is thought that this roost represents the majority of the island population.

Sub-specific identification was not attempted as no birds were in full breeding plumage.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* onboard *Dorthe Oldendorff* 1999.
Photo: Capt T Johannsen.

Little Green Heron *Butorides striatus*

Common resident. Found on all islands surveyed, generally occurring in overgrown wet areas, it will also frequent rocky shore lines at low tide. A conservative estimate of the island population is 65 pairs.

Comparison was made of a series of excellent slides and photographs taken by the expedition, with skins in the Natural History Museum (NHM). The comparison revealed that the birds occurring on Diego Garcia are much paler overall than the Madagascan *B s rutenbergi* Hartlaub and the south-east Asian *javanicus* Horsfield. The Diego Garcia birds are generally darker than the two subspecies that occur in the Maldives *B s didii* Phillips & Sims and *albidulus* Bangs (Phillips 1963). The series of photographs and slides from this trip match the

skins from the Chagos held in the NHM and appear to support the recommendation of Ripley (1969), 'to maintain the name *albolimbatus* for an isolated island population.'

Glossy Ibis ***Plegadis falcinellus***

A single resident bird. The single bird noted by Symens in 1995 and Carr in 1996 was still present in 1997, haunting the airfield lagoons.

Domestic Fowl ***Gallus gallus***

Common introduced resident. Found breeding primarily around human habitation, though some adult birds with chicks were noted over 2km away from habitation.

White-breasted Waterhen ***Amaurornis phoenicurus***

Common resident. Breeding was witnessed at five different sites, all of the chicks appeared to be less than ten days old when first noted. The breeding season for this species on Diego Garcia is prolonged; chicks have been recorded in March (Carr 1996), July (Symens 1996) and now August. Two to three chicks appear the norm. The island population is assessed as a minimum of 50 pairs, this being the number of territories identified.

Comparisons of slides and photographs taken on the expedition with skins at the NHM identified the birds occurring on Diego Garcia as the subspecies that is resident on North and South Malé Atolls, *Ap maldivus* Philips & Sims (Phillips 1963). However, most authors now lump *maldivus* with the nominate which occurs throughout the remainder of the Maldives (Phillips 1963).

Pacific Golden Plover ***Pluvialis fulva***

Possibly a regular winter visitor with individuals remaining through the summer. A single winter plumaged individual was seen on the airfield on the 9th. This species was first recorded in the Chagos in 1995 by Symens.

Grey Plover ***Pluvialis squatarola***

Fairly common winter visitor, regularly over-summers. The most numerous *Charadriidae* wader to winter on the island. Regularly seen in small numbers (1-10) whenever any mudflat was searched for waders.

Greater Sandplover ***Charadrius leschenaultii***

Uncommon winter visitor, though seen daily. The maximum count was five on the 16th. Single birds were noted daily, normally at Point Marianne.

Whimbrel ***Numenius phaeopus***

Fairly common winter visitor, some individuals over-summer. Recorded on a daily basis, counts of up to 30 birds were normal. The highest numbers were always found on the airfield and golf course.

Common Greenshank ***Tringa nebularia***

Fairly common winter visitor. Non-breeding plumaged birds were noted daily, the fresh water airfield lagoons being their favoured habitat. Counts of up to 10 birds on any day were normal.

Common Sandpiper ***Actitis hypoleucos***

Uncommon winter visitor. Two birds on the airfield lagoons on 11th, a singleton at the same site on 13th and two further birds noted on 15th at the sewage farm pools. All birds were in non-breeding garb. Even on Diego Garcia, this species remains faithful to fresh water habitats.

Grey-tailed Tattler ***Heteroscelus brevipes***

Very rare winter visitor or vagrant. A single individual was noted on West Island feeding on the rocky shoreline. This species was first recorded in the Chagos in 1995 by Symens and was seen again by Carr in 1996.

Ruddy Turnstone ***Arenaria interpres***

Common winter visitor, some individuals over-summer. The second most numerous wader

occurring on the island after Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*. The island population in August numbered in the low hundreds. Found throughout the island wherever prey is available, they are particularly numerous at road-kill crab sites.

Red-necked Stint *Calidris ruficollis*

Very rare migrant or vagrant. A single bird in amongst a flock of some 60+ Curlew Sandpiper was observed on the 16th. The bird was still moulting out of summer plumage and had vestiges of the rufous feathering diagnostic of this specis. The only previous record for the Chagos Archipelago is of two birds in non-breeding plumage observed on 20 March 1995 (Symens, 1996). This species is either a vagrant to the area or a very small number spend the northern winter here.

Curlew Sandpiper *Calidris ferruginea*

Very common winter visitor. The commonest wading bird on Diego Garcia in August with flocks numbering over 100 being noted regularly on the airfield lagoons and mudflats around Turtle Cove. A few individuals still had vestiges of summer plumage. The island population in August totalled over 1000 individuals.

Indian Barred Ground-dove *Geopelia striata*

Common introduced resident. Flocks of up to 20 birds were regularly seen around the accommodation area. This species can be found in any of the open areas around the island, it appears to stay out of the densely wooded regions.

Madagascar Turtle Dove *Streptopelia picturata*

Common introduced resident. This species is either not as numerous as the previous species or is more secretive in its habits. Flocks of up to 14 birds were seen on three days in the accommodation area and twice around the plantation church. Occasional birds were heard in 'song' around the island, normally from dense patches of wood. This species was also noted on Middle and East Island and appears resident on both.

A series of slides and photographs taken on the expedition were compared against skins in the NHM to try and ascertain which subspecies is present on Diego Garcia. Our slides did not match any of the skins in the museum and we are none the wiser as to which race (or hybrid/endemic) is occurring. It would appear that specimens are required to solve this mystery. For a fuller discussion on the systematic status of *Streptopelia picturata* occurring on Diego Garcia see Benson (1970).

Indian Mynah *Acridotheres tristis*

Very common introduced resident. It is difficult to discern which is the more numerous species, this or the Madagascar Fody *Foudia madagascariensis*. Both are abundant in large flocks throughout the open areas of the island.

Madagascar Fody *Foudia madagascariensis*

Very common, presumed introduced resident. The breeding season had recently finished. Large flocks (100+) of adult males moulting out of summer plumage along with females and recently fledged juveniles were common around the scrubby areas of the golf course and air field. Several empty nests of this species were located in bushes along road sides by the air field.

DISCUSSION

Overview

The paucity of historical ornithological records from the Chagos makes discussion on the population dynamics of the area's land birds difficult. The few published papers generally do

not indicate numbers of wintering birds or estimates of breeding populations of landbirds.

The record for introduced species is probably the most complete. It is thought that the decade when a species was introduced is known for most and certainly where the decade is not clear, the correct century is known (Lever 1987).

The uncertainty of northern winter visitor species status (migrant or vagrant) is confused. Several waders have only been recorded by one author, eg Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* (Hutson 1975) and Nordman's Greenshank *Tringa guttifer* (Symens 1996). Other families such as ducks, crows and true passerines have also only been recorded by one author eg Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca* (Symens 1996), Pied Crow *Corvus albus* (Curtis 1974) and Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* (Gadow *et al* 1907). The lack of long term observations from the area means assessing certain species' status is a questionable exercise.

Introduced Species

Cattle Egret: Cattle Egret numbers have increased steadily since their introduction to Diego Garcia in the 1950s from the Seychelles (Lever 1986). The breeding season for Cattle Egret is prolonged on Diego Garcia, being noted in November/December (Laustou-Lalanne 1962), May (Pocklington 1967, Hutson 1975) and now August. The time cannot be far away when the island cannot support a larger population due to lack of prey. It will be interesting to see if Cattle Egret spread to the other island groups within the Chagos or not.

Domestic Fowl: Domestic Fowl numbers are likely to be related to the labour force on the island; the larger labour force requiring more chickens. Whether this species would survive without the assistance of man is debatable, probably rats and cats would eventually render them extinct.

Other Species: The lack of historical records for Madagascar Turtle Dove, Indian Barred Ground Dove, Indian Mynah and Madagascar Fody make trends undetectable. All appear to be thriving at present.

Waders

All other species recorded were wading birds and all had been recorded before on Diego Garcia. Comparison of wintering wader numbers is not possible due to the lack of records. It is also a pointless exercise as wintering wader numbers in the Chagos are probably related to breeding success and weather conditions on migration rather than any conditions in the Chagos. What has become apparent is that a greater species diversity of waders regularly occur on Diego Garcia than previously thought.

Since 1995 known winter range distributions have been extended in the Indian Ocean to include the Chagos for at least five species of wader. Grey-tailed Tattler, Red-necked Stint and Pacific Golden Plover all being recorded by Symens in 1995 and noted again by Carr in 1996 or Diego Survey personnel in 1997. The most significant range extensions to date are the 1995 finds by Symens of wintering Nordmann's Greenshank and Asiatic Dowitcher *Linnodromus semipalmatus*, both internationally rare species.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A single recommendation is that further controlled surveys are conducted throughout the Chagos. In the case of winter migrants, surveys in December or January are likely to produce the largest number of species. For resident species survey teams should endeavour to record total numbers present and where possible breeding numbers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Once again, Expedition Diego Survey 97 would like to extend their sincere thanks to all organisations that supported their efforts, in particular WWFN for financial support. Dr Robin Prys-Jones at the Ornithological Department of the Natural History Museum in Tring proved a mine of information and an inspiration for further work. With thanks.

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UNCOMMON SEABIRDS IN FALKLAND ISLAND WATERS, 1998–1999

Black AD, Gillon KW and White RW

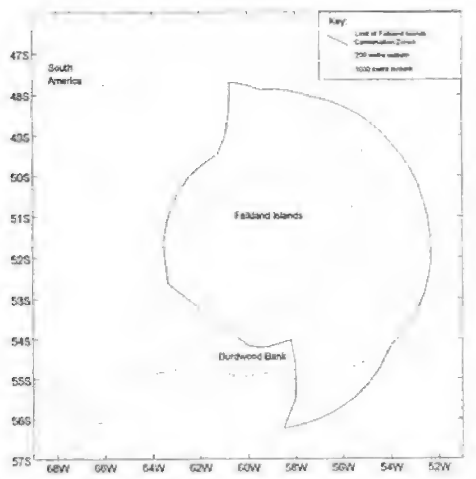
South-west Atlantic Seabirds at Sea Team

The south-west Atlantic has been regarded as an important habitat for seabirds since the *Discovery* expeditions of the 1920s. However, only a limited amount of direct research into the seabird distributions in this area has been carried out. Much of the data available comes from opportunistic records collected by mariners in the region (Tickell & Woods 1972, Rumboll & Jehl 1977, Cooke & Mills 1972, Brown *et al* 1975, Thurston 1982 and Bourne & Curtis 1997). Veit (1995) examined the seabird community structure of the South Atlantic and found species assemblages associated with physical oceanographic features. These studies have been restricted largely to the austral summer months, although, Bourne and Curtis (1985) and Curtis (1994) have also reported observations from winter months in the waters of the Falkland Islands. However, our knowledge of the status and distribution of the less common seabirds encountered in Falkland Islands waters is extremely limited.

The prospect of oil exploitation in the waters of the Falkland Islands triggered the formation of the South-west Atlantic Seabirds at Sea Team (SWASAST) to carry out at-sea surveys of seabirds and marine mammals within Falkland Islands waters.

Since February 1998 a year-round programme of seabird surveys has been conducted by the three members of SWASAST in and around the waters of the Falkland Islands. Most surveys were carried out within Falkland Islands Conservation Zones, the limit of which extends some 360 km to the north, south and east of the Islands and some 110 km to the west of West Falkland (Figure 1). Total survey effort achieved in the first two years of the project is shown in Figure 2. Survey effort is depicted as the area surveyed (km2) in all 1/4 International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) rectangles (cells measuring 15' latitude x 30' longitude). It is important to highlight here that there is significant variation in seasonal and spatial survey coverage (White *et al.* 1999). This should be borne in mind when interpreting survey results.

The methods used for surveying seabirds at-sea during the course of the project are the same as those used by the Seabirds at Sea Team in the north-east Atlantic, full details of which may be found in Webb & Durinck (1992); see also Tasker *et al.* (1984).



Thus far, more than 18,035 km^2 of survey coverage has been achieved and 57 species of seabird recorded within the waters of the Falkland Islands. The results of the first year of this work including detailed distribution maps for all species regularly encountered are reported in White *et al.* (1999). Observations of infrequently recorded species (those with less than 100 birds recorded) in the first two years of the project are reported here.

Nomenclature and taxonomy follows Gales (1998) for albatrosses and Harrison (1987) for all other seabirds.

Figure 1 Main study area showing bathymetry and the limit of the Falkland Islands Conservation Zone

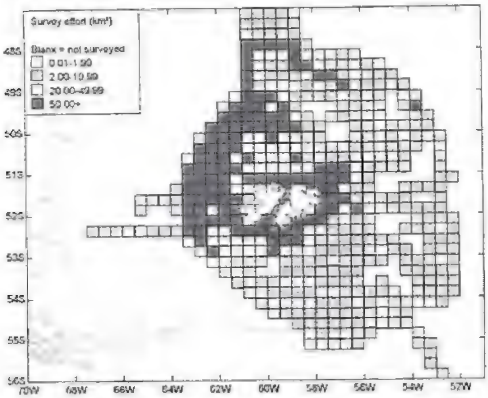


Figure 2 Distribution of survey effort, February 1998 to January 2000.

Macaroni Penguin ***Eudyptes chrysolophus***

Macaroni Penguins are the rarest breeding penguin species in the Falkland Islands with just 50 breeding pairs (Woods & Woods 1997). To date, SWASAST have recorded 27 birds during surveying. Two birds were recorded in oceanic waters to the extreme north of the survey area during July 1998 with a further individual seen in the same general area during July 1999. Four separate records, totalling 24 penguins, were made during September 1999 in this same area. With such a small local population in contrast with the vast numbers on South Georgia, some 5 million pairs (Croxall *et al.* 1984), it seems likely that at least some of the birds recorded were of South Georgian origin.

Chinstrap Penguin ***Pygoscelis antarctica***

The Chinstrap Penguin is considered a vagrant visitor to the Falkland Islands (Woods 1988) with all previous records involving birds on land. This species has been recorded only once within Falkland Islands waters when two birds were recorded in August 1999 to the south of Burdwood Bank. When surveys have extended beyond the limits of the main study area, towards South Georgia, chinstrap penguins have been recorded more frequently. It would appear that the waters of the Falkland Islands lie at the northern limit of this species' winter range.

Shy albatross species ***Thalassarche cauta* spp.**

Bourne & Curtis (1985) first recorded Shy Albatrosses in Falkland Islands waters in 1984. Between February and May of 1998 and 1999 this 'species' was recorded by SWASAST on 14 occasions, mostly over continental shelf waters to the west of the Islands. January 2000 produced a record of a bird over oceanic waters to the north of the Islands. A high proportion of the birds recorded were immature. Most of the birds recorded exhibited characteristics of the **White-capped** or **Shy Albatross** types, *T steadi* or *T cauta* respectively, although specific identification at sea is problematical. Three birds, however, were probably **Salvin's Albatrosses** *T salvini*.

Sooty Albatross ***Phoebetria fusca***

Only three sooty albatrosses have been recorded during SWASAST surveys. All records come from deep waters to the north-east of the Islands, two in January 1999 and one in December 1999. Woods (1988) quotes only three previous records of this species within Falkland Islands waters. Surveys conducted by team members in oceanic waters of the South Atlantic outside

Falkland Islands waters indicate that this species is more frequently encountered at lower latitudes.

Light-mantled Albatross ***P palpebrata***

Light-mantled albatrosses are considered to be one of the widest ranging of the albatross species (Thomas 1982). However, prior to this project, few documented records have come from Falkland Islands waters (Woods 1988, Curtis 1994). To date, 15 light-mantled albatrosses have been recorded by SWASAST within Falkland Islands waters. Sightings have been made throughout the year, with the majority of records coming from waters beyond the continental shelf edge. It would appear, therefore, that this species is a regular visitor in low numbers to Falkland Islands waters.

Antarctic Petrel ***Thalassoica antarctica***

Previous records of Antarctic petrels suggest that this species is a vagrant to Falkland Islands waters (Woods 1988). Results of SWASAST surveys in the austral winter of 1998 support this, with only a single record (at 54°43'S, 57°17'W in August). The austral winter of 1999 however, resulted in many more sightings, with 57 birds recorded between July and September. Most records were of birds near the Burdwood Bank; however, birds were also recorded off the east coast and over oceanic waters to the north-east of the Islands (Figure 3). Although approximately twice as much effort was achieved in oceanic waters during the austral winter of 1999 than in 1998, with 858 km^2 in 1998 and 1,673 km^2 in 1999, the difference in the number of Antarctic petrels recorded suggests that there is high inter-annual variation in numbers.

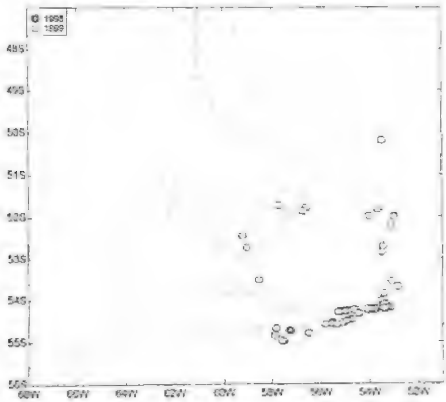


Figure 3 Distribution of Antarctic Petrel sightings, showing inter-annual variation in the number of sightings. Every symbol represents a ten-minute period in which this species was recorded.

Great-winged Petrel ***Pterodroma macroptera***

Great-winged petrels have been recorded only twice during surveys. Both sightings occurred within days of each other by independent observers. One was seen at 53°05'S, 52°27'W on 26 February 1999 with the other at 47°52'S, 60°42'W on 1 March 1999. There are only three previous records of this species in Falkland Islands waters, totalling ten birds (Bourne & Curtis 1985, Gregory 1994). All the available data suggest that the Falklands are situated on the periphery of this species' range.

White-headed Petrel ***P lessonii***

Only three White-headed Petrels have been recorded during surveys thus far; in January, September and November 1999, with all records coming from Patagonian shelf slope waters to the north and east of the islands. The lack of sightings during surveys and the few previously documented records (Brown *et al* 1975, Woods 1988) indicate that this species is a vagrant within Falkland Islands waters.

Grey Petrel ***Procellaria cinerea***

Grey Petrels have been recorded irregularly during the first two years of the project. Two were recorded in each of the months October 1998, January 1999 and July 1999, and a single bird was recorded during December 1999 and three were recorded during January 2000, all while surveying deeper waters of the study area. Highest numbers were recorded during February 1999 when 14 were observed to the south-east of the Islands. A further ten were recorded outside the Falkland Islands Conservation Zone, but within the main study area during this period, suggesting a possible influx during the late austral summer.

Cory's Shearwater ***Calonectris diomedea***

To date, only one Cory's Shearwater has been recorded during surveys of Falkland Islands waters, to the south of West Falkland in November 1999. When surveys were conducted to the north of the main study area, in January 1999 (Black 1999), Cory's Shearwaters were found to be one of the most numerous species encountered indicating that Falkland Islands waters lie beyond the southern limit of this species' normal range.

Manx Shearwater ***Puffinus puffinus***

Manx Shearwaters have been recorded only twice in Falkland Islands waters by SWASAST. One was recorded in November 1998 (at 50°36'S, 57°21'W) with the other encountered in January 1999 (at 48°00'S, 60°28'W). When the team had the opportunity to extend survey coverage to waters to the north of the main study area in January 1999, an additional six Manx Shearwaters were recorded. These observations and the fact that only three Manx Shearwaters had previously been recorded in Falkland Islands waters (Gregory 1994) indicate that the Islands lie at the extreme southern limit of this species' range. There is evidence that suggests that this species may well be more numerous in coastal waters, at similar latitude, of continental South America (Cooke & Mills 1972).

Little Shearwater ***P assimilis***

Little Shearwaters have been encountered occasionally during surveys, with most recorded during the austral summer months. In total, 16 little Shearwaters have been recorded by SWASAST within Falkland Islands waters. With only three previous records (Woods 1988, Gregory 1994), this species had been considered a vagrant to these waters; however, SWASAST surveys suggest that it is a more frequent visitor.

Grey Phalarope ***Phalaropus fulicarius***

Two Grey Phalaropes were recorded during surveys in December 1998 (at 51°28'S 57°21'W and 48°29'S 57°53'W). The lack of previous records suggests that the Falkland Islands lie towards the southern limit of this species' range.

Chilean Skua ***Catharacta chilensis***

The at-sea identification of *Catharacta* skuas is problematical at best. The issue is further confused in the Falkland Islands and mainland South America where some authors have suggested that Chilean and **Antarctic Skuas**, *C antarctica*, interbreed (Woods 1988). However, despite these difficulties, two Chilean Skuas have been confidently identified during surveys, one in November 1998 (at 49°04'S, 55°47'W) with the other in January 1999 (at 52°00'S, 62°22'W).

Arctic Skua ***Stercorarius parasiticus***

The Falklands are considered to lie towards the extreme southern limit of this species range, to spend the austral summer in the South Atlantic (Olsen & Larsson 1997). To date, 33 Arctic skuas have been recorded by SWASAST, all in the period January to April, and all either to the north of the Islands or within coastal waters. These records, along with previous sightings of this species (Woods 1988, Bourne & Curtis 1985), suggest that Arctic Skuas are regular austral summer visitors to Falkland Islands waters.

Cayenne Tern ***Sterna sandvicensis eurygnatha***

There is only one previously documented probable occurrence of this species in Falkland Islands waters - in December 1989 (Gregory 1994). Cayenne Terns were recorded only once during surveys, when two were recorded in April 1999 (at 48°38'S, 60°40'W). The lack of further records from these much-surveyed waters indicates that this species is a vagrant to Falkland Islands waters.

Arctic Tern ***S paradisaea***

Results of SWASAST surveys suggest that Arctic Terns are not common within Falkland Islands waters. To date, the team has recorded only 20 individuals, one in November 1998, two in March 1999, three in October 1999, four in November 1999 and ten during January 2000. Additionally, several terns seen over offshore waters during the austral summer, recorded as *Sterna* species, were probably of this species. These results are in contrast to Woods (1988) who states that Arctic Terns are 'apparently recorded offshore throughout the year'.

Discussion:

No new species for the Falkland Islands were recorded during the first two years of SWASAST surveys but the status of many of the rarer species is better understood.

Given the lack of previous co-ordinated seabird surveys in Falkland Islands waters, it is perhaps unsurprising that a number of species previously considered as vagrants appear to occur on a more regular basis. For some species, distinct patterns are beginning to emerge: 'shy' albatrosses have been shown to be regular visitors in small numbers to shelf waters to the north-west of the Islands in autumn, while Little Shearwaters have been shown to be present in similar numbers during summer months. Conversely, Antarctic Petrels would appear to be more sporadic in their appearance, with the winter of 1999 producing more sightings than all the previous records combined.

Surveys conducted during the austral summer months have shown that there is an influx of birds that breed on the Tristan da Cunha and Gough Island groups to deep waters to the north-east of the Falkland Islands (White *et al.* 1999). Although this assemblage is numerically dominated by **Great Shearwaters** *Puffinus gravis*, **Soft-plumaged Petrels** *Pterodroma mollis* and **Atlantic Petrels** *P incerta*, it also includes some of the uncommon species recorded (sooty albatross, grey petrel and great-winged petrel). The remoteness of these waters may account for the lack of documented sightings of many of these species; further coverage in this area is likely to produce more records.

It is interesting to note that several species, notably **Atlantic yellow-nosed Albatross** *Thalassarche chlororhynchos*, **Snow Petrel** *Pagodroma nivea* and **South Polar Skua** *Catharacta maccormicki*, have not yet been recorded during SWASAST surveys but have previously been recorded within Falkland Islands waters (Woods 1988, Bourne & Curtis 1985). Both Atlantic Yellow-nosed Albatross and Snow Petrel have been recorded by the team outside Falkland Islands waters, the former in waters to the north of the main study area and the latter in waters south of the Antarctic Convergence. Both species would therefore appear

to be at the edge of their range in Falkland Islands waters. Immature South Polar Skuas migrate from breeding sites on the Antarctic continent to winter in the north Atlantic (Olsen & Larsson 1997). Presumably, some of these birds migrate through Falkland Islands waters and therefore the lack of records of this species is unexpected.

The species featured here can broadly be split into two categories: vagrants and edge of range species. While most of the species dealt with here are at the edge of their respective ranges, it is likely that continued coverage of the waters surrounding the Falkland Islands will provide further records of most species. This information will enable the status of rare species, as edge of range or vagrant, to be more accurately described.

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GULF OF SUEZ - *SEA SWALLOW* OBSERVATIONS

In reviewing *Sea Swallow's* bird records on the recently completed computerised database for the 150nm stretch of water between Port Tawfik and Gubal Strait, it was somewhat surprising to me that such a well-used shipping lane should as yet be so relatively unrecorded. The Suez Canal undoubtedly facilitates access by seabirds from the Mediterranean; whilst the islands off Hurghada just to the south which harbour significant breeding populations of Red Sea endemic and Indian Ocean species, mean some of these birds too wander into the Gulf of Suez.

Large numbers of the LBJ's that rush in and out of Africa every year probably pass along its shores or attempt a crossing too; but be aware not all your sightings may gain immediate acceptance by the powers that be, qv. Appendix 1, Birds of Egypt (1989) – rejected sightings include an Aquatic Warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola* seen in Wadi Kabrit, Gebel Zeit on 8 March 1984 by yours truly! BWP proclaims its migration as inconspicuous, especially in spring. In autumn they mostly enter Africa via Iberia, but may leave in spring by another route to their eastern European breeding haunts.

Add to this the dramatic impact even such a narrow body of water can have on progress to the mass migration of the 'soar and glide' fraternity that transits the Levant twice every year to and from Africa, and you have the bird-rich Gulf that we land-lubbers know and to which the observations of Dave Simpson point – he operated on vessels in the oilfields between Ras Shukeir and Abu Zenaima/Abu Rudeis for some months in 1985 and 1995 (*Sea Swallow*, Vols 35 & 45).

Nevertheless however limited the RNBWS records may be, some of them have proved seminal, and others provide important confirmation and amplification of perceived wisdom.

When Vol.1 of BWP was published in 1979 Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea* was not thought to occur beyond the Mediterranean. By the time Birds of Egypt (1989) was published more than 10 incidences of occurrence in the 'Red Sea' could be cited; the first being Walter Weitkowitz's records from *mv Andalusia* at two locations in the Gulf of Suez on 15 August 1980 (*Sea Swallow*, Vol 31:12).

Ras Budran oilfield (Sinai shore) under construction; where since commissioning storks have been seen to use thermals over the gas flare to regain height after crossing Gulf of Suez.
Photo: Stan Howe

Gebel Zeit from the air: a gathering point for raptors and storks about to cross the Gubal Strait in spring. *Photo:* Stan Howe

Again, apropos the route taken by the storks and raptors and their ilk; Suez town has long been famed as a place where birds that use thermals to spiral and glide their way forward with the minimum expenditure of energy, might avoid crossing the Gulf, albeit only c.40nm wide for most of its length. A more southerly crossing at the Gubal Strait narrows c25nm wide was also recognised but not generally regarded as a major routing. Several *Sea Swallow* reports of large numbers of White Storks, and one (*Sea Swallow* Vol 14) of thousands of 'Sparrowhawks' (Almost certainly Levant Sparrowhawk *Accipiter brevipes*) hinted that this might be the case; and my own observations at Gebel Zeit (28N+33:27E) and Ras Gemsa (27:39N+33:35E) on the one side and Ras Budran (29N+33:10E) on the other strengthened that belief – a belief recently vindicated by Gebel Zeit being listed in BirdLife International's sponsored Important Bird Areas of Egypt (1999). One incident concerning a host of White Storks resting on Ras Gemsa on 1Mar 1984 is worth retelling since it made the British national press in an article by Max Nicholson published by '*The Guardian*'. When disturbed some 400 attempted to fly out, in a long straggling line over the Gubal Strait towards El Tor into a fairly stiff head wind. A little while later they were back overhead, still flapping and gliding and still facing El Tor, but going backwards feet first!

So please let us have more attention focussed on the area north of Hurghada; the Red Sea south of there is much better reported (although often the records have been published with less than adequate positional detail to be of best use to those documenting the birdlife of Arabia. new editors please note).

Stan Howe, Alma House, Torphins

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White Stork(s) from below: White Storks gliding backwards overhead Ras Gemsa (12.3.1984) after failing to cross strait into a headwind. *Photo:* Stan Howe

White storks flapping low over water past an oil platform off Ras Shukheir (late March 1983). *Photo:* Hugh Jarvie.

For reference of would-be reporters the current list of species recorded in *Sea Swallow* for the area bounded by the parallels 27°N and 30°N (excluding Gulf of Aqaba) comprises:

Non-Passerines:

Cory's Shearwater	*Calonectris diomedea*
Brown Booby	*Sula leucogaster*
Great Cormorant	*Phalacrocorax carbo*
White Pelican	*Pelecanus onocrotalus*
Little Egret	*Egretta garzetta*
Western Reef Egret	*Egretta gularis*
Cattle Egret	*Bubulcus ibis*
Black Stork	*Ciconia nigra*
White Stork	*Ciconia ciconia*
Greater Flamingo	*Phoenicopterus ruber*
Northern Shoveler	*Anas clypeata*
Black Kite	*Milvus migrans*
Eurasian Sparrowhawk	*Accipiter nisus*
Levant Sparrowhawk	*Accipiter brevipes*
Long-legged Buzzard	*Buteo rufinus*
Peregrine Falcon	*Falco peregrinus*
Black-winged Stilt	*Himantopus himantopus*
Green Sandpiper	*Tringa ochropus*
Arctic Skua	*Stercorarius parasiticus*
White-eyed Gull	*Larus leucophthalmus*
Sooty Gull	*Larus hemprichii*
Herring Gull	*Larus argentatus ssp.*
Lesser Black-backed Gull	*Larus fuscus ssp.*
Great Black-headed Gull	*Larus ichthyaetus*
Black-headed Gull	*Larus ridibundus*
Slender-billed Gull	*Larus genei*
Caspian Tern	*Sterna caspia*
Lesser Crested-tern	*Sterna bengalensis*
Greater Crested-tern	*Sterna bergii*
Roseate Tern	*Sterna dougallii*
Common Tern	*Sterna hirundos*
Little Tern	*Sterna albifrons*
Saunders Tern	*Sterna saundersi*
White-cheeked Tern	*Sterna repressa*
Bridled Tern	*Sterna anaethetus*
Rock Dove	*Columba livia*
Laughing Dove	*Streptopelia senegalensis*
Blue-cheeked Bee-eater	*Merops persicus*
Eurasian Hoopoe	*Upupa epops*

Passerines:

Hoopoe Lark	*Alaemon alaudipes*
Lesser Short-toed Lark	*Calandrella rufescens*
Barn Swallow	*Hirundo rustica*
Red-throated Pipit	*Anthus cervinus*
White Wagtail	*Motacilla alba*
Yellow Wagtail	*Motacilla flava sspp.*
Thrush Nightingale	*Luscinia luscinia*
Common Redstart	*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*
Blackstart	*Cercomela melanura*
White-crown Black Wheatear	*Oenanthe leucopygia*
Mourning Wheatear	*Oenanthe lugens*
Streaked Scrub-warbler	*Scotocerca inquieta*
Lesser Whitethroat	*Sylvia corucca*
Sardinian Warbler	*Sylvia melanocephala*
Willow Warbler	*Phylloscopus trochilus*
Common Chiffchaff	*Phylloscopus collybita*
Collared Flycatcher	*Ficedula albicollis*
Red-backed Shrike	*Lanius collurio*
Great Grey Shrike	*Lanius excubitor*
Woodchat Shrike	*Lanius senator*
Pale Rock Sparrow	*Carpospiza brachydactyla*
Sinai Rosefinch	*Carpodacus synoicus*

(Wot – No Ravens!)

Superficially a longish list, but small by referring to what species are possible betwixt Egypt and Sinai. Many are but single sightings, and their value would be advanced by confirmatory sightings over a range of seasons.

SUMMARY OF SITES BY SPECIES

Cory's Shearwater ***(Calonectris diomedea)***
1058350 October Field, 1. 5 Aug 1995. (U)
1059205 off Abu Zenima, 1. 15 Aug 1980
1059153b Suez Anchorage, 2. 15 Aug 1980

Brown Booby ***(Sula leucogaster)***
1057452 by Sharm el Sheikh, 12.14 Jul 1996

White Pelican ***(pelecanus onocratalus)***
1058313* Gulf of Suez, 9. 15 Mar 1985

Little Egret ***(Egretta garzetta)***
1059253bbb Suez Anchorage, 21 Sept 1983

Western Reef Egret ***(Egretta gularis [garzetta])***
1058313* Gulf of Suez 1 Jan 1985

Cattle Egret ***(Bubulcus ibis)***
1058313* Gulf of Suez,1. 5 Apr 1985

Black Stork ***(Ciconia Nigra)***
1058313* Gulf of Suez, 3. 15 Mar 1985
1059253bbb Suez Anchorage, 2. 21 Sep 1983

White Stork ***(Ciconia ciconia)***
1058233* Ras Shukeir-Cairo. 20 Apr 1985
105830302 Gulf of Suez, 5000. 15 Apr 1965
105830404 Gulf of Suez, 1000. 21 Mar 1985
105831146a Gulf of Suez, 600. 8 Mar 1985
10581147 Gulf of Suez, 3000. 7 Aug 1966
1058312 Gulf of Suez, 3 Sep 1991
1058350 October Field. 18 Aug 1995
10593 Abu Zenaima, 1000. 26 Aug 1995
10593* Gulf of Suez, 7,500. 3 Apr 1962
10593*d Gulf of Suez. 1 Sep 1984

Great Flamingo ***(Phoenicopterus ruber)***
1059253c Suez Bay, 20. 8 Apr 1997. (U)

Northern Shoveler ***(Anas clypeata)***
1058350 October Field, 10. 28 Aug 1995

European Honey-buzzard ***(Pernis apivorus)***
1058313* Gulf of Suez, 5. 16-15 Mar 1985. (U)

Black Kite [sp] ***(Milvus migrans)***
1058313* Gulf of Suez, 53. 15-13 Mar, 12 Apr, 21-18 Mar 1985

Black Kite ***(Milvus migrans migrans)***
1058313* Gulf of Suez, 3. 20 Mar 1985

Eurasian Sparrowhawk ***(Accipiter nisus)***
1057344 Strait of Gubal, 1000.
11 May 1961. (U)
1058313* Gulf of Suez, 3. 9, 14, 20 Apr 1985

Long-Legged Buzzard ***(Buteo rufinus)***
1058313* Gulf of Suez, 2. 12 Apr 1985

Peregrine Falcon ***(Falco peregrinus)***
1058313* Gulf of Suez,1. 17 Apr 1985. (U)

Black-winged Stilt
(Himantopus himantopus himantopus)
1058313* October Field, 1. 23 Aug 1995

Green Sandpiper ***(Tringa ochropus)***
1058313* Gulf of Suez, 1. 16 Mar 1985

Arctic Skua ***(Stercorarius parasticus)***
1057335 s Tawilah I, 17-14 Jul 1996. (U)
1059253g Bay of Suez, 7. 10-11 may 1963

White-eyed Gull ***(Larus leucophthaimus)***
1057335 s Tawilah I 250. 14 Jul 1996.
1057452 by Sharm el Sheikh. 14 Jul 1996
1058311 Gulf of Suez, 6. 6 Jun 1989.
1058501 Sinai Coast, 6. 27 Jun 19955.
1059253bb Suez Anchorage. 8 Jul 1987.

Sooty Gull ***(Larus hemprichii)***
1057452 By Sharm of Sheikh. 14 Jul 1996.

Herring Gull ***(Larus argentatus argentatus)***
1058350 October Field, 2. 11 Aug 1995.

Lesser Black-backed Gull [sp] ***(Latus fuscus)***
1059253a Suez Bay. 16 Apr 1953.
059253fb Suez Bay, 20. 15 Jan 1990

Lessar Black-backed Gull
[fuscus] ***(Larus fuscus fuscus)***
10593*b Gulf of Suez, 105. 17 Mar 1988.

Black-headed Gull ***(Larus ridibundus)***
1058301 Ras Shukheir. 1 Jan 1985.
1059233* Gulf of Suez, 300. 5 Nov 1987.

Caspian Tern ***(Sterna caspia)***
1057335 s Tawilah I. 5. 17 Jul 1996.
1059253d Port Tewfik (Suez). 8 Sep 1960.

Lesser Crested Tern ***(Sterna bengalensis)***
1057335 s Tawilah I 1000. 17 Jul 1996.
1057452 By Sharm el Sheikh, 70. 14 Jul 1996
1059253c Suez Anchorage, 4. 6 Apr 1988.
10592539 Suez Anchorage, 25. 5 Jun 1989.

Great Crested-tern . (Serna *bergii*)
1057452 By Sharm el Sheikh, 20. 14 Jul 1996.
1058350 October Field, 10. 1 Aug 1995.
1058351 Abu Rudeis, 1. 11 Aug 1995.
1059204 Gulf of Suez, 10. 25 Jun 1993.

Roseate Tern *(Sterna dougallii)*
1058350 October Field, 2 1 Aug 1995. (U)

Common Tern *(Sterna hirundo)*
1057335 s Tawilah I., 4. 17 Jul 1996.
1059253c Suez Anchorage, 15. 6 Apr 1988.
1059253g Bay of Suez, 35. 11 May 1963.

Little Tern *(Sterna albifrons)*
1057335 s Tawilah I., 83. 17 Jul 1996.
1057452 by Sharm el Sheikh, 20. 14 Jul 1996.

Saunders' Tern *(Sterna saundersi [albifrons])*
1057452 by Sharm el Sheikh 65. 14 Jul 1996

White-cheeked Tern *(Sterna repressa)*
1057335 s Tawilah I 3000. 17 Jul 1996.
1057452 By Sharm el Sheikh, 300. 14 Jul 1996.

Bridled Tern *(Sterna anaethetus)*
1057452 by Sharm el Sheikh, 65. 14 Jul 1996.

Rock Dove *(Columba livia)*
1058351 Abu Rudeis. 27 Jun 1995.
10593 Abu Zenaima, 1 2 Sep, 27 Jun 1995

Laughing Dove *(Streptopelia senegalensis)*
1058351 Abu Rudeis. 27 Jun 1995.
10593 Abu Zenaima. 27 Jun 1995.

Blue-cheeked Bee-eater
(Merops persicus [superciliosus])
1058313* Gulf of Suez, 3. 15, 26- 22 Mar 1985.

Eurasian Hoopoe *(upupa epops)*
1058350 October Field, 1. 6 Sep 1995.
1059253h Bay of Suez 1. 19 Sep 1986.

Hoopoe Lark *(Alaemon alaudipes)*
105835 Abu Rudeis, 2.8 Aug 1995.

Lesser Short-toed Lark *(Calandrella rufescens)*
1058313* Gulf of Suez. 18 Mar 1985. (U)

Barn Swallow *(Hirundo rustica)*
1058313* Gulf of Suez, 1. 15 Mar 1985.
1058350 October Field, 1. 8 Aug 1995.

White Wagtail [sp] *(Motacilla alba)*
1058301 Rais Shukheir. 1 Jan 1985.

Yellow Wagtail *(Motacilla flava)*
1058313* Gulf of Suez, 12. 7 Apr 1985.

Black-headed Wagtail *(Motacilla flava feldegg)*
10593*c Gulf of Suez, 1. 8 Mar 1979.

Thrush Nightingale *(Luscinia luscinia)*
10593 Abu Zenaima, 1. 2 Sep 1995.

Common Redstart [sp]
(Phoenicurus phoenicurus)
1058313* Gulf of Suez, 1. 19 Apr 1985.

Blackstart *(Cercomela melanura)*
10593 Abu Zenaima, 1. 19 Aug 1995

White-crowned Black Wheater
(Onenanthe leucoptga)
10593 Abu Zenaima. 1 Jul 1995.

Mourning Wheatear *(Oenanthe lugens)*
1058351 Abu Rudeis, 2. 22 Aug 1995.
10593 Abu Zenaima, 1. 2 Sep 1995.

Streaked Scrub-warbler *(Scotocerca inquieta)*
10593 Abu Zenaima, 2. 24 Aug 1995. (U)

Lesser Whitethroat *(Sylvia curruca)*
10593 Abu Zenaima, 1. 30 Aug 1995.

Sardinian Warbler *(Sylvia melanocephala)*
105831146b July Oilfield, 1. 8 Mar 1985.

Willow Warbler *(Phylloscopus trochilus)*
1058350 October Field, 1. 6 Sep 1995.

Collared Flycatcher *(Ficedula albicollis)*
10593 Abu Zenaima. 1 2 Sep 1995. (U)

Red-backed Shrike *(Lanius collurio [cristatus])*
10593 Abu Zenaima. 1 Aug, 1 Sep 1995.

Great Grey Shrike [sp] *(Lanius excubitor)*
10593 Abu Zenaima, 1. 29 Aug 1995.

Woodchat Shrike *(Lanius senator)*
10593 Abu Zenaima, 1. 1 Sep, 30-1 Aug 1995

Pale Rock-sparrow *(Carpospiza brachydactyle)*
1059204 Gulf of Suez, 4. 25 Jun 1993. (U)

Sinai Rosefinch *(Carpodacus synoicus)*
10593 Abu Zenaima, 3. 02/09/1995.

For an understanding of MARSDEN SQUARE site references, see SS Vol 43 pp38-40.
(U) = unconfirmed record

TILBURY TO CAPE TOWN
by Peter Cunningham

SA *Sederberg* in Amsterdam Container Port, October 1999. *Photo:* P Cunningham.

SA *Sederberg* slipped from Tilbury at 0200A on October 14 1999 en route to Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and Durban via Rotterdam, Algeiras, Tenerife and Las Palmas. Displacing 72.719 tons, 2585m long and 32m beam and capable of carrying the equivalent of 2900 20ft containers, she is one of the South African Marine Corporation's four 'Big Whites'. This was the only cargo carrier I could find which was willing to ship octogenarians unlikely to die on their hands and I and seven other younger passengers were accommodated in spacious and comfortable en suite cabins below the bridge.

During a discussion with the Master Captain Iain Ross, at dinner the next evening it transpired that he was a son of a former fellow officer in the Flower Class Corvette HMS *Dianella* in 1944!

We passengers shared a bar, spacious anteroom and mess with the ship's officers, who were mostly Africaners, and at dinner every evening I was astonished to see how stable a vessel with such an enormous deck cargo was, even in a heavy swell. The main table decorations were groups of three wine glasses surmounted by a fourth, each of which carried a lighted candle, and not once was there any sign of them collapsing. Shades of the dampened tablecloth and fiddles of a corvette's mess!

The Captain explained that his previous policy of open access by passengers to the bridge had been over-ruled by the new owners, Maersk, and that we would be allowed access only between 0900 and 1100 each day at sea. A former navigating officer, whose tools early in WWII had been magnetic compass, sextant, chronometer and patent log, I was fascinated by the sophisticated aids now available providing instant latitude and longitude and the solution on the radar display of any problem involving course made good or possible collision with another vessel, perhaps not even visible. These and simplified chart corrections, the automatic pilot and the imminent introduction of digital charts made me wonder how an old fashioned navigator found time to carry out all his duties in addition to a couple of hours working out his star sights! I was however, relieved to find that a sextant was carried and enjoyed renewing acquaintance with one. The object of my journey was to renew my war-time acquaintance with these seabirds of the tropics and South Atlantic distracted neither by U-boats nor raiders and

to pay my first visit to South Africa. The former was not going to be as easy as I had hoped since the view ahead and astern, even from the bridge, was obstructed by containers and I found that the best observations could be made from the fo'c'sle and from the stern, both of which were reached by a long walk along the flush main deck under the outer containers to port and starboard. Without walkie-talkies it was impossible for any sightings by others to reach me until meal times. My matutinal visits to the bridge did, however, enable me to record our daily position at 0900 and relevant meteorological data.

During the passage to Rotterdam some landbirds were found on board on or among the containers, including Blackbirds *Turdus merula*, a Goldcrest *Regulus regulus* and a Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*, but the myriad hiding places afforded them by the stacks of containers made birds difficult to find. We sailed from Rotterdam on the 18th at 0900A in fine but cold weather, clearing the port at 1200. By this time some of my enthusiasm for birds had rubbed off on my fellow passengers and we managed to discover in addition to the original stowaways, a White Wagtail *Motacilla alba*, Blue and Great Tits *Parus caeruleus* and *P major*, a Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*, a male Blackcap *Sylvia atricapilla* (in the port lifeboat), two Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris* and a Red Admiral aiming perhaps to live up to its Linnaean binomial *Vanessa atalanta*.

Nightjar *Caprimulgus eusopaeus* 12° 23'N 44° 41'E, 6 October 1998.
Photo: CPO S Copsey.

Rounding Ushant during the forenoon of the 19th we altered course to 210° for Finisterre in a moderate SW swell and NE breeze. A flock of about thirty Starlings flew northwards over us and a probable Garden Warbler *Sylvia borin* perched briefly on a forward container. Occasional Gannets *Morus bassanus* and Great Black-backed Gulls *Larus marinus* were seen. A number of Starlings and a Robin *Erithacus rubecula* were added to the list of our avian passengers. During the afternoon I had a brief glimpse of a Peregrine *Falco peregrinus* over the containers. Two unidentified whales were sighted and Great Skuas *Catharacta skua* and Sooty Shearwaters *Puffinus griseus* passed us also south bound.

At 1630 on the 20th, 19m west of Cabo da Roca and with the Berlengas visible in the east we passed through flocks of Balearic Shearwaters *Puffinus mauretinicus.*

Cape Spartel was seven miles south of us as we entered the Straits of Gibraltar at 0900 on the 21st. Wind was light SW and the sky overcast with the glass rising at 1014. A pod of Pilot Whales *Globicephala melaena* passed us on opposite courses and at 1030 a Swift *Apus apus* appeared briefly and a Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata* found a forward container a useful perch from which to catch insects. At 1300 we tied up at Algeciras (a place at which I had cast many a jaundiced glance from Gibraltar during the war) in the company of many Yellow-legged Gulls *Larus cachinnans.*

Morning on the 23rd found us with Tenerife in sight ahead. From my favourite look-out on a bollard right in the bows in still air, the ship's flare throwing the wind right over my head, I noticed Arctic Skuas *Stercorarius parasiticus* and Wilson's Storm-petrels *Oceanites oceanicus* before we came alongside in Tenerife's containerport at 1330. I was astonished that during the seven hours of our stay I saw not a single seabird in the harbour; nothing but feral Rock Doves *Columba livia!*

Even in Las Palmas the next day I noted only a score or so of Herring Gulls, including a few of the Yellow-legged variety, some terns, Great and Lesser-Black-backed Gulls *Larus marinus* and *L fuscus* and Black-headed Gulls *L ridibundus* , one feral Rock Dove and five or six Spanish Sparrows *Passer hispaniolensis..*

Soon after sailing from Las Palmas and heading SE for Cape Town we ran across Wilson's Storm-petrels, Arctic Skuas and Cory's Shearwaters *Calonectris diomedea* and the first flying fish.

We crossed the Tropic of Capricorn in longitude 17° 15'W soon after I arrived on the bridge on the 25th, course 190° at 20.5 kts. During a break in the thick sea mist which covered us most of the day I saw a Little Shearwater *P assimilis,* several pale and dark phase Pomarine Skuas *Stercorarius pomarinus,* Great and Arctic Skuas, Gannets, European Storm-petrels *Hydrobates pelagicus* and Wilson's Storm-petrels and some unidentified terns. Deafened by the ship's foghorn behind me on the dwarfish foremast I had to give up at last.

We passed eight miles off Dakar at 0800 on the 26th and seemed to have entered the NE trade winds area. It had cleared the mist away and revealed many skuas and a vast milling flock of Manx Shearwaters *Puffinus puffinus.* One Great Skua was seen to knock a Manx Shearwater into the sea, while a passage of Sandwich Terns *Sterna sandvicensis* continued unmolested nearly all forenoon. About 1020 there was a spectacular display by hundreds of dolphins, probably *Delphinus delphis,* stretching to the horizon (how I missed my mammal field guide!).

At 1650 I spotted an adult Sabine's Gull *Larus sabini* as it passed close by.

Disappointingly few birds were seen as we proceeded through the tropics crossing the Equator at 1800 on the 27th in longitude 11°W. Another disappointment was the absence of any sea birds on board during the voyage for study in the hand and photography.

The highlight of the 29th, as we passed the latitude of Pointe Noire in the Belgian Congo, the farthest south in the Atlantic I reached during war, was a White-tailed Tropic-bird *Phaethon lepturus*. A turtle and a Sperm Whale *Physeter macrocephalus* were the only other items of interest.

By November 2 in position 29° 12'S 14° 05'E course 143° we were beginning to come across great fronds of kelp and by 0900 were seeing our first Black-browed Albatrosses *Diomedea melanophris*, seven of them in company astern at one point and all the passengers dancing with excitement on the 'quarterdeck'. From then on it was all go with all abundance of Black-browed and occasional Grey-headed Albatrosses *D chrysostoma* White-chinned Petrels *Procellaria aequinoctialis* and Great-winged Petrels *Pterodroma macroptera*, Pintado Petrels *Daption capense*, Cape Gannets *Morus capensis*, Great Shearwaters *Puffinus gravis* and two Wandering Albatrosses *Diomedea exulans* in the distance. Two small flocks of whitish, broad-winged birds with erratic flight close to the surface puzzled me and remain an enigma.

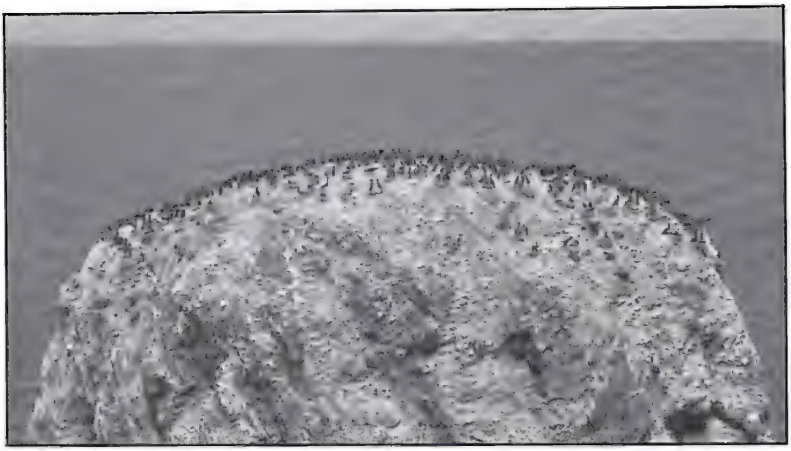
Such were the variety and number of birds around the ship from then on that I was soon overwhelmed at times and longed for the help of a seabird expert. Even with the aid of Captain Tuck's *Seabirds of the World* I must have overlooked many species. Anyway, I left my copy on board to complement their copy of his book on the seabirds of the trade routes, which is not much use without means of identification.

I had several close encounters with some of the larger species. On my seat in the bows (Peter's Seat as it came to be known!) I was only an arm's length from the rushing mighty wind deflected by the bow flare and a Yellow-nosed Albatross *Diomedea chlororhynchos* and a White-chinned Petrel got as big a fright as I when they misjudged the speed of the ship and almost hit me. I could have touched the former's multicoloured bill.

We arrived off Cape Town just before dawn on the 3rd, we newcomers struck dumb by the magnificent scene unfolding as the sun gradually lit up Table Mountain and revealed Cape Town in its picturesque setting. I had only four days in Cape Town but managed to see 59 lifebirds, including Jackass Penguins *Spheniscus demerus*, Hartlaub's Gull *Larus hartlaubii* and the Kelp Gull *L dominicanus*. To an islander it was amusing to realise that the white birds overhead in the Cape Town area were not gulls but Spoonbills *Platalea alba*, egrets *Egretta* sp. or Pelicans *Pelecanus onocrotalus!* The flight home was an anti-climax!

THE GULLS OF KOKO NOR, QINGHAI, WESTERN CHINA

During a journey from Xining to Kunming across the eastern Tibetan plateau, I visited the Koko Nor (Blue Sea), Qinghai (37°N, 99°E), a listed breeding site of the Great Black-headed Gull *(Larus ichthyaetus)* on 26 July 1990 - the lake's surface is 10,300 feet above sea level and its waters support a sturgeon fishing fleet. The gull breeding season was already over and both the Brown-headed Gulls *(Larus brunnicephalus)* and any Great Black-headed Gulls had already dispersed, leaving much litter on the extensive grassy spit they had nested upon. The odd *Larus sp* was still to be found around the lake and 100+ Great Cormorant *(Phalacrocorax carbo sinensis)* were breeding on a lone rock stack about 1km south of the gullery.



Koko Nor: Breeding Great Cormorants ssp *sinenis*.
Photo: Stan Howe.

The photograph of a flying gull showing clearly defined white wing tips was originally taken believing it to be a Brown-headed Gull, but this field mark is better associated with Great Black-headed Gull. However, the jizz was not right and the bird appeared to be too small with a fine bill and darkish legs - could it have been a Relict Gull (*Larus relictus*) I now wonder?

Koko Nor: Possible Relict Gull *(Larus relictus)* 26 Jul 90.
Photo: Stan Howe.

A previous visit to the area in June 1988 revealed a colony of 400+ Great Cormorant on a stack just off the west coast of Koko Nor. Nearby on the flat marsh by the coast was a tight colony of 500+ Brown-headed Gull with a few Bar-headed Goose nests intermingled. Nearby to the south, a pair of Black-necked Crane were breeding, again on flat lacustrine marsh.

Stan Howe

THE SOUTH INDO-ATLANTIC *FREGATTA* STORM-PETRELS

Since I commented a long time ago (Bourne 1960) before I had even seen the birds alive that 'the exact forms (of *Fregetta)* which occur are hard to determine, because the distinctive belly-markings are variable and hard to see...', and this is still being widely quoted, it seems time to revise it.

The storm-petrels show two contrasting types of flight. The northern forms in the subfamily Hydrobatini, especially the genus *Oceanodroma,* tend to swoop and soar like terns, while the southern forms in the subfamily Oceanatini tend to feed by 'walking on the water'. The extreme development of this trend is found in the genera *Fregetta* and (barely separable) *Nesofregetta,* which have long legs with small feet, and tend to hop on the water, performing a gyration at the top of the hop which shows off the distinctive markings of their underparts, usually white in *F grallaris* but with a dark line down the centre of the breast in *F tropica,* so that well-marked birds are not difficult to identify.

As with many other predators, the situation is obscured by the occurrence of chromatic polymorphism, which possibly helps to confuse their prey. Thus in general the southern storm-petrels may be either dark or light below and on the rump (Kinghorn & Cayley 1922, Murphy & Snyder 1952). Similar variation of the rump may also occur in the otherwise dark species, in which it may either be white, have a pale patch on each side, or be entirely dark in both Leach's Storm-petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* (Bourne & Simmons 1997) and Wilson's Storm-petrel *Oceanites oceanicus* (Bourne 1987 Curtis 1988). But as in the case of an apparent entirely dark Black-bellied Storm-petrel *Fregetta tropica* (Ryan *et al* 1987) the extreme aberrations usually occur in company with more normal birds so that they are easily recognised.

The main outstanding problem involves the occurrence of a pale phase of the Black- bellied Storm-petrel with a white breast in both the South Atlantic and Indian Oceans. *'Fregodrome deceptis'* of Mathews & Hallstrom 1943, for which the correct scientific name appears to be *Fregetta melanoleuca* Salvadori, also collected twice amongst a group of variable birds from the USS *Eltanin* at 57° 56'S 153°53'E south of Macqarie Island on 12 February 1967 (FC Kinsky *in litt.*). While its existence has been questioned by a number of people who do not appear to have examined many specimens critically, it differs from the White-bellied Storm-petrel *Fregette grallaria* by having less marked pale fringes to the feathers of the upperparts or dark tips to those of the chin and sometimes rump in fresh plumage, and a proportionately short wing and long tarsus and middle toe (Fig 1).

It is still debatable where these birds come from, but it would appear that whereas the *Fregettas* collected on the lower islands Inaccessible and Nightingale in the Tristan group by Hagen (1952) and also one from low St Paul are all *F grallaria,* most from the higher island Gough where the upper slopes resemble the scree habitat of *F tropica* further south (Beck & Brown 1971), and the the few from the other high islands Tristan and Amsterdam, appear to be *F melanoleuca* (Clancey 1981, Imber 1983, Bourne & David 1995, Bourne 1999), and may be a population of small *F tropica* with white breasts possibly due to some hybridisation with *F grallaria* nesting at the higher levels.

Some white-bellied *Fregettas,* reported further south in the Atlantic, notably at least seven with grey backs and chins that I saw well over subantarctic water (14-10°C) with Little Shearwaters *Puffinus assimilis* which must have come from the Tristan-Gough group between 52.01°S 55.8°W east of the Falklands and 53.1°S 45.1°W west of the Shag Rocks on 24-25 February 1990, and also a number of similar birds which I saw over the RSA Seamount east

of Gough Island in February 1985 (Bourne 1992), may belong to this form, so it seems desirable to exercise caution over the identification of white-bellied *Fregettas* in this area (and indeed since they also migrate north off the Western Palearctic as well).

The possibility that members of the genus *Fregetta* may hybridise in the Tristan-Gough, and possibly also St Paul - Amsterdam (Bourne & David 1995) groups raises the question whether the exceptionally large size of the race of White-bellied Storm-petrel *Fregetta grallaria titan* breeding at Rapa in the Austral group of the South Pacific might also be due to hybridisation with the large White-throated (or Polynesian) Storm-petrel *Nesofregetta albigularis* which is now known to breed there as well (Holyoak & Thibault 1984).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to many people in many museums around the world for access to and sometimes the loan of specimens, and Dr CS Roselaar for discussion of these birds in the past.

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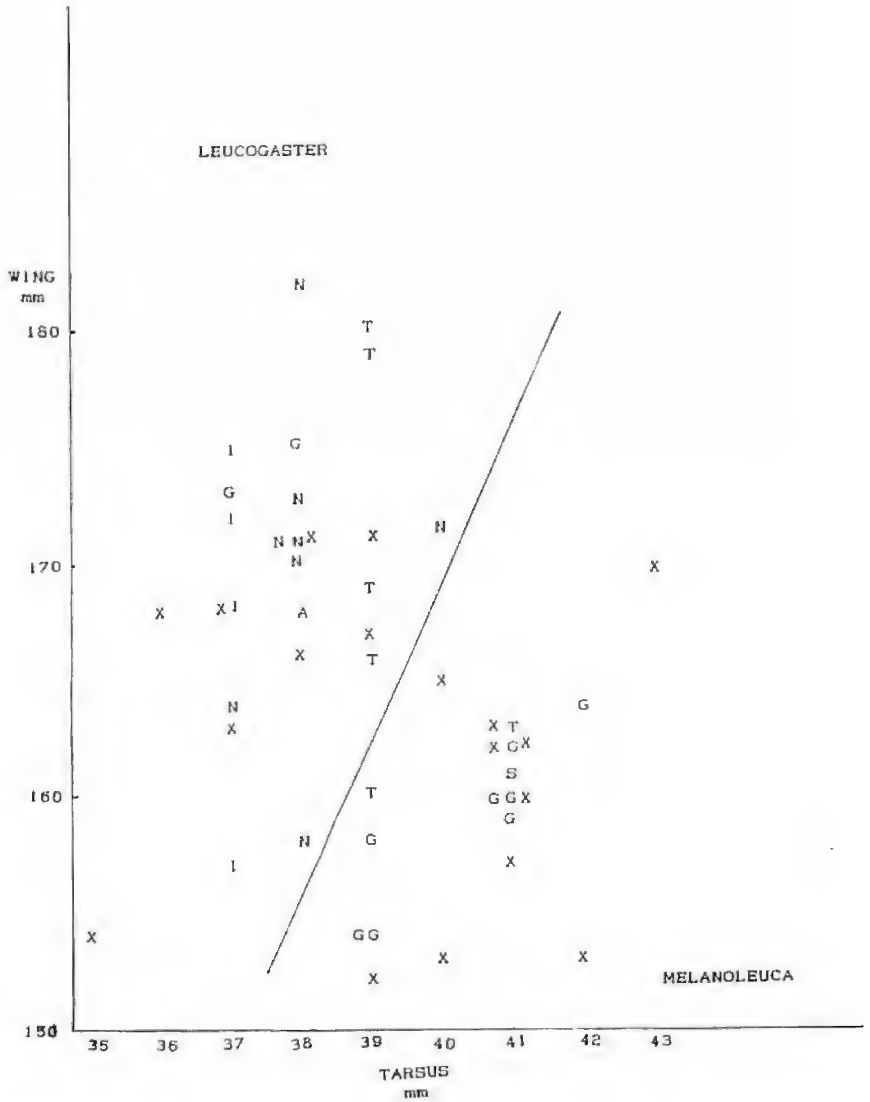
Figure 1. Comparison of the wing and tarsus length and appearance of white-breasted *Fregetta* storm-petrels from the southern Atlantic and Indian Oceans. All specimens examined personally taken on or near Tristan da Cunha (T) Nightingale (N), Inaccessible (I), Gough (G), St Paul (S), and Amsterdam (A) islands, or at sea (X). The birds on the right of the line tended to have narrower pale feather fringes on the back and dark ones on the chin in fresh plumage, and white rumps, and appear to belong to a distinct form for which the name *Fregetta tropica melanoleuca* has priority, and those on the left of it more prominent white feather fringes on the back and dark ones on the chin and sometimes also rump and appear to belong to a distinct form *Fregetta grallaria leucogaster*.



BEHAVIOUR OF FALKLAND GENTOO PENGUINS IN A SNOWSTORM

by Dr WRP Bourne

The smaller penguins are now known largely to leave the Falkland Islands for the adjacent continental shelf in the winter, whereas the large King *Aptendodytes patagonicus* and Gentoo *Pygoscelis Papua* Penguins remain behind. Thus when RFA *Sir Lancelot* was on patrol around the islands in June 1984 we saw a number of Gentoos at colonies in Fox Bay on the 9th. When we were off the north coast on the 12th it started to snow, so we anchored in the sheltered waters north of West Point Island at about noon. The islands were by then covered in snow, and we were visited by a cock Black-throated Finch *Menodera melanodera* and two other unidentified passerines.

The most surprising development, however, was the assembly in the evening of about a thousand Gentoo Penguins *Pygoscelis papua* in a huddle on the peninsula projecting from the mainland nearby, where Robin Woods tells me there are large colonies. The following morning there were only a few dozen, but as the weather improved and the snow began to melt in the evening and as we left with blue skies on the morning of the 14th there were several hundred present there again. The most surprising feature of these observations was that the maximum number of penguins was seen during the worst weather, suggesting that they prefer to come ashore then.

COLOUR-RINGED CORMORANTS AND GREATER BLACK-HEADED GULLS FROM THE BLACK SEA

Almost 1500 fledgelings of Cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo* were colour-ringed during the 1999 breeding season at different colonies in the Sivash, a major wetland between the Black and Azov seas (46.00N-034.30E). The ringing expedition, jointly carried out by the Azov-Black Sea Ornithological Station (Melitopol, Ukraine) and the Italian Wildlife Institute (INFS, Ozzano Emilia), was funded by the Fishery Directorate of the Italian Ministry of Agricultural Policies, within a project aimed at assessing the origin and trend of the Central Mediterranean wintering population of cormorants. A by-product of the expedition consisted of 50 colour-ringed Greater Black-headed Gulls *Larus ichtyaetus*. We do not plan to repeat Cormorant ringing in the nearest future. Therefore, it is extremely important to obtain as many sightings and readings as possible right from the start of the post-natal dispersal. Mauve-pink rings were used on Cormorant and yellow ones on Greater Black-headed Gull; both ring types are engraved with a combination of black letters. All birds were fitted with metal rings (Moskow or Bologne) too. According to the existing recoveries, it is most likely that the majority of these birds will migrate to the Middle East and the eastern coasts of the Mediterranean, possibly as far to the west as Italy and Tunisia. Please report all the rings you may observe/read to Nicola Baccetti (INFS, via Ca Fornacetta 9, I-40064 Ozzano Emilia BO, Italy; e-mail: infszumi@iperbole.bologna.it).

Valery Siochin (Azov-Black Sea Ornithological Station, Ukraine)
& Nicola Baccetti (INFS, Italy).

HERRING-TYPE GULLS IN THE CASPIAN SEA

Stewart Hingston has now provided a number of photographs of gulls of the difficult 'Herring' group taken at oil platforms in the central Caspian Sea. The first taken in February 1997 shows a Great (or Great Black-headed or Pallas') Gull *Larus ichthyaetus* with a Yellow-legged (or Pontic or Caspian) Gull *L. c cachinnans* and the second taken on 8 August 1998 a possible Armenian Gull *L. armenicus* with rather much white at the wingtip implying it might also be the intermediate form *barabensis*. While these were commonest, during the seasons of migration there were also a number of pale-backed gulls of the Lesser Black-backed *L. fuscus* type which may have been either barabensis or *taimyrensis* and a few with darker backs which may have been *heuglini* or *fuscus* itself.

WRP Bourne

Great/Pallas' *Larus ichthyaetus* and Yellow-legged Gull *Larus cachinnans*, Caspian Sea, Feb 97. *Photo:* Stuart Hingston.

Armenian or Baraba Gull *Larus armenicus*, Caspian Sea Aug 98. *Photo:* Stuart Hingston.

REVIEWS

Cresswell G & Walker D (eds) *Bay of Biscay Cetacean Report 1998.* Pp-45, numerous figures. ISBN 0 9536829 0 0. Bay of Biscay Cetacean Group. 35 Melrose Rd. Norwich, Norfolk NR4 7PN. £5.95 plus 50p p&p.

It was long mysterious where the old whalers used to operate in the Western Approaches (CH Townsend, *Zoologica* New York 19: 1-50. 1935), and it has recently emerged that it must have been along the shelfbreak off the Bay of Biscay. Since 1995 a number of people have started to observe cetaceans from the UK- Spanish ferries, and they have now combined to form a Bay of Biscay Cetacean Group which has produced this report for 1998. It provides a useful description of the area, an 'incredible' (their word) documented list of 21 species of cetaceans. Basking Sharks and a Sunfish found there, and the impact of tuna nets. It ends with a useful list similar to ours (pp24-26) of the birds seen on some 15 trips in July-September by David Gray, in which the main novelty is an undocumented 'probable' Bulwer's Petrel on 23-25 August. The main deficiency in all the records presumably deriving from the difficulty of obtaining such information on ferries is a lack of precise positions for the observations, and it is to be hoped that now the price of satellite Global Positioning Systems (GPS) has come down to about £100 (*Birding World* 12: 162) positions may in future become available as well.

WRPB

White RW, Reid JB, Black AD & Gillon KW 1999. *Seabird and marine mammal dispersion in waters around the Falkland Islands 1998-1999.* Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Monkstone House, City Road, Peterborough PE1 1JY, UK. ISBN 1 86107 504 9, Pp, 93, 94 figures, £17.

This is a glossy A4 publication adorned with the devices of four oil companies claiming in its second sentence to describe 'for the first time at-sea dispersion patterns... recorded for this important sub-Antarctic region', and purporting to map density per square km in 'quarter ICES statistical rectangles' (ie 1/4°S x 1/2°W units) determined during a first year of observation from February 1998 from 'vessels of opportunity'. It is well done except for the faint third colour on the maps, and agrees with our previous observations while extending further south and west. The main novelty is a certain number of Magellan Diving-petrels *Pelecanoides magellani* mainly in the late winter at sea to the west. My main criticism is that as usual this manner of presentation ignores the extent to which birds move about, especially with the weather hardly mentioned when the most critical situations with regard to oil pollution occur along the shore with the more unusual distributions in bad weather (which may be why oil companies support what they must regard as such innocuous activities?). It also ignores most past literature, including not only our own modest contributions but even RC Murphy's classic, monumental Oceanic *Birds of South America* (New York 1936).

WRPB

OBITUARY

Lieutenant Commander ESW Maclure, Royal Navy 1909-2000

Winton Maclure, who died on 18 June, at the age of 91, was Hon Secretary and Treasurer of RNBWS for 27 years, 1957-1984, and his influence over the history and development of the Society over that period was second only to Captain Gerald Tuck's. I suspect he may have suggested my name as a possible successor as Chairman, and when I accepted, with considerable reluctance, in 1980, I did so only with the knowledge that Winton would continue to serve as my guide and mentor. And this he did, for another four vital years. 23 St Davids Road, Southsea thus became very familiar to me - the crowded shelves a museum of memorabilia of his three absorbing interests - his family, the Royal Navy and RNBWS.

Winton was a good and close friend of my family for over 50 years, having served with my father in HMS *Jamaica* in 1945-47. They shared a common interest in birdwatching at sea, and thus both became members when RNBWS was founded, in 1946. Not only did Winton have a keen eye for birds, but he organised both the finances and membership of the society with enormous skill and patience, at a time when the numbers of ships and seagoing members were vastly larger than now, without the gadgetry of computers and word-processors which seem to us so indispensable today. He kept in close and regular touch with all and sundry, and his readily recognisable hand-written letters became a regular feature for many of us. His sharp eyes seldom missed a promotion in rank, or an item of news about one of our members from distant seas - he took pride in knowing us all personally. I shall remember Winton best for his wonderful sense of humour, the twinkle in his eyes, and the gentle chuckle as he recalled memories of RNBWS members of the distant past. My lasting memory of him was my last day at sea, in 1980, when Winton and a grandson came as my guests aboard HMS *Gurkha*, on her final trip from Portsmouth to Chatham. Sadly, the passage was mostly overnight, and neither saw many birds from the bridge next morning because of thick fog in the Medway. Nor, to Winton's disappointment did his grandson subsequently succumb to encouragements to join the Royal Navy!

In 1984, Winton recruited a worthy successor - Peter Smith, who has gallantly kept up the tradition ever since. Quite how much RNBWS owes to Winton is even more apparent now that Peter in due turn is looking for a successor. Even though the post has been split into two, finding replacements has proved long and difficult.

In his final years, Winton came to live in a flat in Waterlooville, from where he continued to follow the hopes and achievements of RNBWS, and to keep in touch with his many friends. He will be very sadly missed.

Michael Casement

OBITUARY

Ronald Mathias Lockley 1903-2000

Ronald Lockley lived a long and complicated life, most of which he has described so well several times over in some sixty books that it is difficult to summarise it briefly.

Born into a monstrous regiment of women in reduced circumstances in Cardiff, at an early age he decided he would prefer to live alone on an island, and unlike most of us then found a volunteer Girl Friday, Doris Shellard, and went and did so on Skokholm. A short, sturdy, basically solitary and somewhat enigmatic person with a tendency to back modestly into the limelight, he wrote so engagingly about the life and birds there that soon he was being visited by most of the Ornithological Establishment of the day, including the first Oxford International Ornithological Congress in a couple of destroyers, and made it into a model widely copied elsewhere.

Initially, intending to farm chinchilla rabbits, among innumerable activities he turned Skokholm into one of the first bird observatories and a nature reserve, started an early local naturalists' trust, helped make an oscar-winning pioneer bird documentary film about Gannets and participated in experiments on homing shearwaters and myxomatosis. When displaced from his island by World War II he took up farming, eventually at Orielton, which also became a field centre, and studied seals and more rabbits, providing the inspiration for Richard Adams' *Watership Down*. He also wrote important pioneer studies of the Manx Shearwater and Puffin, and of Atlantic seabirds with James Fisher.

Sometimes disparaged by 'intellectuals', he was more original, versatile, productive and readable than any of them. After wandering around the islands of the world he eventually settled near his daughter Ann Mark in New Zealand, where he died. He was married three times, and one of his two sons in America, Martin, is a professor of geography and geology.

WRPB

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THE ROYAL NAVAL BIRDWATCHING SOCIETY (RNBWS)

1. I am interested in joining the RNBWS and wish to be enrolled as: (✓ ❑ as appropriate)

❑ **Full Member** £8 (or £7 covenanted)

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Portland: Martin Cade, Portland Bird Observatory and Field Centre, Old Lower Light, Portland, Dorset (01305 820553 Daytime only).
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Scotland - Faslane & Rosyth: Commander N B P Morton RN, Office of FOSNNI, HM Naval Base Clyde. Faslane, Helensburgh, Dumbartonshire.
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or
A E F Rogers. 26 Westleigh Drive, Westleigh. Sydney, New South Wales 2120.
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INSTRUCTIONS TO AUTHORS

Interested persons are invited to submit contributions for *Sea Swallow*, authors do not need to be RNBWS members. Material may take the form of papers, notes, progress reports, letters or reviews.
The style used in *Sea Swallow*, should be followed, with the standard abbreviations, nomenclature and use of references.
Manuscripts should ideally he typed in double spacing, together with figures and diagrams. Accompanying photographs are preferred as prints rather than slides. Those with facilities to do so are encouraged to send on IBM PC compatible 3.5" disc (specifying the word processing software used), together with a hard copy print. ASCII back-tip text is also desirable.
Contributions are welcome at any time, but if for inclusion in the next edition must reach the editor by 31 May.

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